ADAM AND EVE

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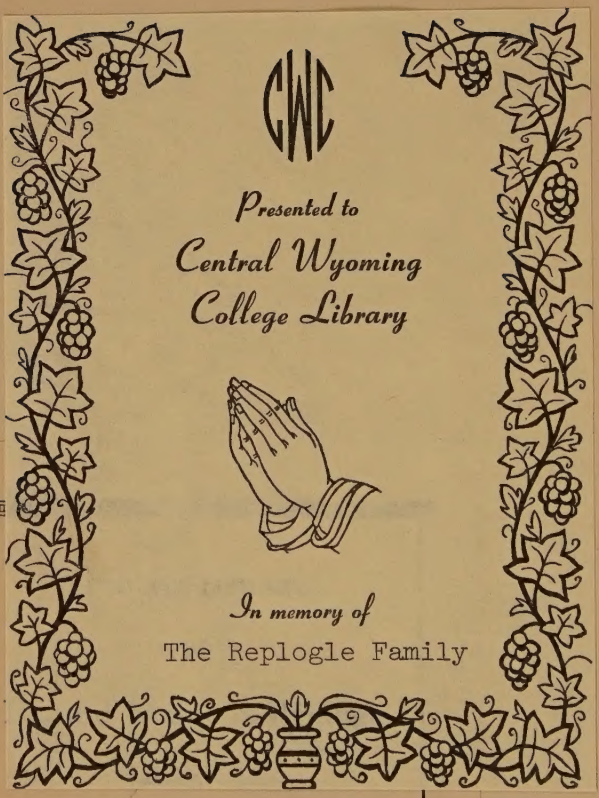
John Erskine



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ADAM AND EVE

Though He Knew Better

By

JOHN ERSKINE

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PART ONE

THE ANIMALS

ADAM *and* EVE

THE ANIMALS

I

God made man, like Himself, lonely. The animals had mates, but man had a soul. God admired this distinction, but man at that time did not.

There's an old story that Adam took his soul among the animals, and tried to make friends with the dog, the horse, the cow and the cat. Up to a point he succeeded, but a day came at last when the divine loneliness could not be endured.

"You mean, you want a mate—like a mere animal?"

"I'm afraid I do," said Adam. "It doesn't sound elevated, as you put it, but I can think of nothing better."

God made Lilith, the most seductive body of a woman the oldest poet remembers.

But a day came when Adam complained of this loneliness also.

"She certainly is beautiful," he said, "and she's aggressively fond of me, but she has no soul."

"No, you have all there is."

"I'm sorry for that," said Adam. "Mate isn't the word—I want another soul."

Then God created Eve, and divided the one soul between them. Not the addition Adam asked for, but division. She became man's wife.

Lilith spoke to the snake, asleep in the garden:

"Lend me your body for a moment, till I break this up."

They used to paint the first temptation so—offering the apple—the serpent's body with the woman's head.

We are familiar with a briefer history of Adam, which says nothing about Lilith. It says nothing of his adventures among the animals, except that he gave names to them. To the land creatures, that is—the fish for some reason remained anonymous. And he ignored the cat, to show his disapproval of the Egyptians, who at the moment were worshiping it. This version says, moreover, that Adam shared with Eve not his soul but his rib. Why do Lilith and soul disappear from the legend, and the rib emerge?

But the condition of the text need not disturb us. I never question an old story myself, not when I like it, and least of all when it recurs daily under my eyes. Adam is not yet at peace. He can reconcile himself neither to be lonely, like a god, nor to be completely mated. On the whole he favors the angels, but he prefers to be a little lower. His naming the animals, what is it but a parable of the scientist in him? He knows the name of a thing at sight. Later he tries to find out what it is.

The difference still remains between Lilith and Eve. We don't state it now, however, in terms of soul. Perhaps Lilith has more soul than the other, if it comes to that. But we say that Eve has temperament, in the artistic or difficult sense, and Lilith, though a beautiful woman, has none. For a man, this formula gives Lilith a charm she may not deserve, an advantage to start with.

Most men regret that it also makes her by definition so rare as to be extinct. Even we concede, we who have known her, that the brief and famous account of Adam which left her out was, in the large, a prophetic book.

II

Of Adam's social life before he met Lilith the record is meager, but it is essential to our history. Let me sum it up in broad outlines.

The first thing he did was to admire the landscape. At noon precisely he opened his eyes on a broad meadow, green and close-cropped. He saw it from across the road, and along the road a stone wall closed it in. On the other side of the field a second wall ran parallel—he noticed the coincidence. The one near by was covered with a green vine, very glossy. He wondered if the farther wall was so handsomely adorned.

To the right, under maples and oaks, certain animals were huddled, switching away at flies. He recognized the maples, but wasn't sure about the oaks, and in the shade he couldn't identify the animals. He suspected cows. To the left the ground fell away and there was a distance—more fields, more maples, and one apple orchard. Adam's impression was of a good world, well arranged.

He was conscious of observing it for the first time. That is, the first time for anybody. Nothing that happened to him had ever happened before. This perception recurs among his descendants during childhood and youth.

The impulse came on him to walk in the meadow—not a difficult venture, he supposed, if he could climb the wall without harming the glossy vine. But first he must cross the road. The road ran the other way, of course, but no doubt it could be used crosswise. He

found it pleasant under foot, except where the cart ruts caused unevenness. But the turf on the other side was painful—the best parts tickled and all the rest tore his skin. He saw the advantage of keeping to the road. There was no essential defeat in giving up the meadow, since the extreme choices remained, the road to the left or the road to the right. "My soul is content," thought Adam, "so long as my will is free."

The vividness of his philosophy diverted his attention from where he was going, and, before he expected, he had turned the corner of the field. The road, oddly enough, bent right into the wall, but where wall and road met there were no stones, only two stout posts, with bars stretched between them. To lean on, obviously. He went up and leaned on the top rail.

There was a cow, as he had thought, one cow, of early middle age. When he looked at the cow, he had to put away the thought that in a good world there might be imperfections. The cow was sitting down, or you might say lying down, except that its feet were under it. It was in a nervous state. It kept up a continuous but practically silent motion with its jaws.

There was a single horse, too. It appeared to be asleep, yet it remained standing, and from time to time it brushed itself off with its tail. The turf where it stood had been entirely dug up. He wondered why it didn't prefer to stand on grass.

Just behind the horse's heels a dog was stretched out, his nose thrust into the dirt.

Adam would have been curious about the dog, but something yellowish was creeping toward him along the top rail of the gate—a fuzzy, elastic something which

moved by humping itself up and then stretching out again. It differed from the larger creatures in being interested in him. First it crept up his hand and examined the skin—then on along his arm. Though it tickled, he didn't mind so long as he could see it, but it climbed his shoulder and went on down his back. He understood now why the horse kept brushing himself. His arm wasn't long enough to reach over his shoulder, and he had just made up his mind to wait till the thing got farther down, when it fell off of itself. There it was on the ground, a small curled mass. He stepped away carefully. Perhaps one oughtn't to lean on a gate.

The road went no further, but there was a stretch of softer grass. It looked softer, and when he tried it, it felt damp. Soon it was positively wet. He lifted his foot to see if there was anything wrong with him, or whether the trouble was altogether in the grass. Then, a few yards ahead, he saw a smooth glistening, very lovely—a pool filled by a spring. It had bubbles at one side, and over them a tiny spout of water from a crack in the rock. At that place the wall was broken—only a few big stones—the water got in around them.

Since there was no delicate vine on these stones, he thought he might walk on them. But they proved not good for walking. He couldn't imagine what had pulled his foot from under him. As though something didn't like him. More than the fall, the thought was disintegrating. He sat down on the cold stone to think it over, and wait till he felt better.

The noise he had made when he slipped brought the dog to the meadow edge of the spring. The beast came slowly, stopped short, and looked at the white figure on

the stone. Adam thought it looked sympathetic but he wasn't sure, because the animal didn't look long. After a moment it moved its nose over the moist earth and began to sniff, then stuck out its tongue and patted the water.

"*That* doesn't seem to hurt," thought Adam; "I might try it myself." But there was some dark trick about it—the right way to stick out the tongue. His hair got wet, chiefly, and when he aimed his nose straight, the way the dog did, there was a sharp discomfort in his head, and he couldn't breathe. He got off the stone, discouraged, and walked away. Gates should be avoided. And water.

To the right, behind the spring, a path led up the hill. No broad road with wheel-tracks, but a narrow smoothness. He began with caution, following the windings among trees and bushes. Some of the bushes, he noticed, had red decorations on them, in clusters, and some had black. The color effect, he thought, was ingenious. Were those bright things part of the branch? Or were they put on afterwards? Not all the bushes had them, and they were arranged carelessly. They came off, too—several lay on the ground. Caution to the winds, he reached in his hand. Though the branch never moved —he could swear it didn't—yet it bit him, a thin bite across his wrist, and how it hurt! Bushes didn't like him, either.

He stood quite still and looked down and around, to be sure he wasn't touching anything he shouldn't—quite still and thought hard. He had intended no harm, yet here in the space of a few minutes he had got two separate hurts. He would never confuse them, if they

should happen again. When your foot was pulled away, the feeling was broader but not so intense, and it didn't last so long. It made more noise, however.

He looked again at the inscrutable bush. The world was not so well ordered as it seemed. With that discovery came his first taste of sadness, a wound on the inside, yet he might have laughed it off quickly had it not been for the sudden idea that good world or bad, he wasn't entirely welcome in it. Very well, he would leave—who cares to stay where he isn't wanted? In view of what he had got out of it so far, why investigate the world further? Once the question was formulated, however, the answer was inevitable; he knew he would never leave till he had to. "I think I have the love of life," said Adam.

This thought encouraged him, even inspired a sense of pride, and he started up the path again, superior to bushes. Suddenly he came out on a hillside shelf, an open space with more room than was needed. He was on his guard now, but for all he could see there were no stones, and there was no water. The bushes did continue to the edge of the clearing, but there they stopped. Obviously a safe place. He chose a maple root. The path went on through the woods, but he postponed exploration.

Now he could see through the trees, or over them, and his meadow lay below, filled with more sun than before. There at the left was the place he had started from, and straight ahead, at the end of the field, that beautiful distance, with the apple orchard in it. The trees stood symmetrically, in rows each way. Apples must be a methodical fruit.

As he looked, he saw the cow move away from him toward the distance, or a little to the right. She had a queer walk, not as though she touched ground, but as though she were suspended from something and swinging. There was no path in the field, but she seemed to know where to go. Her departure emphasized his solitude. He hadn't many companions, and in spite of her restless habit she was a decent creature.

But between her image and his eye a small leaf-like shadow fluttered from a tree, sidewise, and lighted on a bush. He could see the branch tremble with its modest weight. While it was fluttering down it looked broad and loose, but on the branch it was narrow and trim—a bit tilted up at each end. One end suddenly struck at the bush, and to Adam's delight, bit it. Good for the little creature! It didn't like the bush any more than he did! Evidently that was the way—a quick stroke.

Just as he came near, the grayish brown shadow fluttered off—up again, of all things, not down. But it had served its purpose. Adam reached over carefully and gave the red decoration, without warning, a sharp pinch. It came away in his hand, ripe and squashy, and he licked his fingers. But his hand was bleeding.

"I've seen enough of life for one day," he thought. "It's not a bad world, if you sit still. Every time I move I make a mistake." His mind reverted to the spot from which he had first strayed. "I began well," he mused, "if only I hadn't gone too far!"

When he came to the spring, on his way back, the water seemed much darker, and when he reached the gate, the meadow was deserted. The horse and the dog had followed the cow. He was in the midst of a reflec-

tion that the pain in his hand was not serious, when he stepped on the tail of a small black creature crouched in a wheel-track. The black thing shrieked across the road, clawed its way up the bark of a tree, and clinging there, turned its head and spit at him. Adam's nerve failed, but he moved to the side of the road and staggered on.

"Just when I was beginning to enjoy myself again!" he sighed. "That's what I call bad luck."

He felt so shaken that when he came to the spot in the road from which he had begun, he was strongly inclined to lie down and stay there. Weariness he had not yet thought of, but lying down would preclude the possibility of error. The grass, however, was still prickly, and if he lay in the road, the spitting black thing might step on him in revenge. He walked on. His thoughts were interrupted from within by memory of the red decoration he had squashed from the bush and licked from his fingers.

When he reached the orchard, the state of the ground surprised him. Grass, of course, he had met before, but here it came in bristles. From what he had seen of the cow, he doubted if she could eat so evenly. At intervals between the trees a dry, wisplike vegetable had been heaped in sizable mounds—pleasant smelling, and graceful in design, but otherwise superfluous. On the whole, he judged it safe to investigate—and under the pressure of his hand the mound sank agreeably. Meant to sit on, no doubt. For the first time Adam sat down of his own will, and made the delicious acquaintance, not of hay, but of rest.

From where he sat he could see the hill, and it was all red. Over it burned a strong unpleasant light, also red. The light was falling slowly into the hilltop, which grew blacker the more it fell. "If there's anything wrong," thought Adam, "I'm sorry, of course, but it's not my fault." But when the red light went out altogether, he missed it, like the cow.

More than ever he wished for another bush, at any cost. A new sensation in him, not comfortable, kept suggesting, he didn't know why, that red taste on his finger-tips. But there was no light, and rest was best—and anyway, if the world was getting lost piecemeal, perhaps it didn't matter.

In the darkness he heard twitterings and chirpings. Perhaps they were there before, but now he noticed them. He wished they would stop. Since they wouldn't, he covered himself with some of the mound, and tried not to listen. They persisted, louder. But all at once he forgot them in a larger noise—a far-off baying, lugubrious and fearsome. Some creature was singing, apparently about something it didn't like. He suspected the horse, because the biggest animal would naturally make the biggest noise. What if the horse, for all his quiet deportment that afternoon, had decided to express the general dislike of Adam?

Just before resting on the mound, he had noticed a short stick under the tree near by. Now he groped for it, and felt better with something to hit with. But what if the horse, like that crawling thing on the fence-rail, should be interested in his back? Adam lifted the mound, section by section, and piled it against the tree. He sat

down, stick in hand, tree behind him. Let the unfriendly horse sing on! Now he could watch in peace—that is, if he could see—that is, if there were a little more light—that is, if only his eyes wouldn't close just when he needed them—that is——

III

ADAM'S second day was one of his best. For one thing, he felt at home in the world. "Meet an experience but once," he said, "and it's no longer strange." He had yet to make the acquaintance of woman. Meanwhile his mind was relieved that little remained to learn.

When he woke up, the darkness had vanished—perhaps over the ridge where the sun had gone. The ground was shining, like the grass near the spring, really wet when he walked on it. A small imperfection, however, since there was light again, and the horse had stopped singing.

Adam started up the road toward the scenes of yesterday's adventures. Though his back and his neck were stiff, he hurried on, just why, he wasn't sure—until he reached the first bushes. Scratch or no scratch, he thrust in his hand. Yesterday's wound was healed, to-day's would be, and meanwhile he must eat. Satisfied with breakfast, he perceived a better world. Fear had died in the night, difficulty had become mere inconvenience, novelty was giving way to habit. Far off he saw as it were an idea coming, that nothing in human life is as hostile to man as it seems. But he wasn't sure yet.

He continued up the road. "Here," he remarked, "is where the black cat climbed the tree." In the clear mood of dawn he knew its name, and the knowledge gave such confidence that when another small creature bounded across the road in front of him, he wasn't startled—

he expected it to climb a tree, of course, but when it hid in the grass instead he looked for it, crowded it into an angle of the wall, and caught it. A soft thing, with long ears and large delicious eyes. For a few minutes he could feel its heart throbbing, but after he had stroked it a while it grew calm. There was something about it to make a man feel kind.

"My first what you might call friend!" said Adam. "I was lonelier than I had any idea of. Of course, it's small, and its face is benevolent rather than intelligent, but it's of a more intimate nature, decidedly, than the cow or the horse." He didn't know the dog well enough to venture on a comparison.

The moment he put the soft friend down, however, it left him. It bounded to an opening in the wall and disappeared, but presently the beautiful eyes showed. Adam hardly breathed. The head and ears stuck out. Adam shifted to another foot, and a dead branch cracked under his heel. The head and ears were gone. "No use hurrying the acquaintance," he reflected. "Yesterday I should have been nervous myself. It probably expects me to bite."

To-day even the road was improved—it was easier to walk on, and it was shorter. He reached all the important points sooner than he expected. At the pasture gate he leaned resolutely on the top rail. "I'll do it as I picked berries," he told himself. "Caterpillar or no caterpillar, this is what the thing is for! Courage! Life demands nothing more."

Neither the horse nor the dog, only the cow was up so early, tearing at the grass with her teeth, and lifting her head to chew it, or to rest her neck. She walked as

she ate. "Except for the corners, where the framework is coming through," he observed, "she looks almost as soft as that rabbit, and if I stroke her back, perhaps we can be friends too." He thought of getting over the gate, but one leg slipped through the bars, and he found it practicable to follow the leg. Not the sort of entrance he would have chosen, but at least he was in the field, and since the cow had her head lowered, intent on his activities, it was a simple impulse to pat her nose. But the nose, when he got near it, was amazingly wide, and couldn't be included in a single caress. Ah well, his purpose, anyway, had been to stroke her back. When he tried to step around and begin the stroking, the cow turned simultaneously, with her head toward him. "Perhaps the nose must be patted first, after all," he considered. But when he raised his hand, the cow ducked, and backed off. He saw the need of more patience than he had tried on the rabbit. He held his breath and maintained silence; not once did he shift his weight. The cow got tired of looking at him, and went on eating.

"The best approach," reasoned Adam, "will be from this angle, as soon as she has moved a bit further ahead. I shall reach her side before she sees me." Perhaps the cow saw him coming, but if she didn't like it she concealed her feelings. He couldn't tell whether she entertained interest or suffered annoyance—the two possible prologues to friendship. "Perhaps she hopes I'll behave naturally if she seems not to notice," he thought. He proceeded to stroke, but there was a hard ridge all along the top of her, like a roof timber. When he began to investigate it, the cow suddenly folded her neck back sidewise, and looked at him. Adam walked away. "I

always hurry things," he said, "I must remember not to frighten them."

His own heart was thumping fast, when he came to a stand a few safe yards away and watched the cow resume her nibbling. She made a sound of busy satisfaction—it couldn't be that she was really annoyed with him. He had the impulse to go away and leave her, as he had left the rabbit, but the day had begun too hopefully for any more capitulations. He would try again.

When he reached the cow's side and began to stroke her back, he was a bit disappointed that she didn't notice him. He stroked rather hard, to attract her attention, but she ate on, and he had to walk steadily to keep up with her. Even when he took firm hold of that ridge along the top, she recognized the caress only with a switch of her tail, as though conscious of a larger fly. "It must be that we're friends now," said Adam.

He thought he might as well revisit the spring—today perhaps water and stones would be friendly too. Besides, he was learning how to live without hurting himself. At the gate, for instance, he remembered not to climb but to squeeze between, and when he stepped on the rock, he looked before he put his foot down. He perceived the truth which comes only to men who are proud of themselves—"To live at all," he said, "is an art."

The cow startled him by splashing into the pool. Silently she had followed, and now she stood in mud up to her knees. For the first time Adam had opportunity to study her face. The shape wasn't graceful, but there were elements of beauty—the eyes, for example; he liked their dimensions, their color, the way she kept them open

without blinking. He tried to do it himself, but couldn't. "That," he said, "is my idea of a thoughtful expression. She is contemplating nothing outside of her—not me, for example. Something within, rather."

He was about to have more ideas, but his foot slipped. This time, however, having noticed the damp greenish surface, he knew in advance the reason of his fall, and didn't blame the rock. He got his hand down, too, so he didn't hit the rock hard, but it was bad for his hand. The main inconvenience was that when he climbed out, on the side toward the road, he was brown-covered up to his knees, like the cow, and felt sticky, as no doubt she did. How to make himself white again, he couldn't guess, and the cow evidently didn't know.

Meditating this problem, concerned but not dismayed, he saw a black body come insinuating itself along the top of the wall. What had climbed and spit at him—his enemy the cat. She carried in her teeth a dark, reluctant little body with a twitching tail. Something in the cat's manner suggested she would like to be alone, and Adam had no wish to intrude; she was the first creature he had seen in the act of biting. The bushes were subtle, but the cat was shameless. He turned away from her toward the road, and had just noticed with appreciation that the long grass was taking the mud off, when the dog appeared in a sudden rush from nowhere. Adam heard a frantic commotion up the bark of the tree, and before he had turned around the cat was safe on a high branch gazing down and expressing violent disgust. The dog was clawing the trunk beneath. Adam thought well of the dog, and was sorry the cat was safe. What had happened to the mouse he forgot to inquire.

"The dog ought to pay less attention," he thought, "then perhaps the cat would come down. Almost everything seems to behave favorably if you don't look at it, or if you pretend not to. Come here!" he said. "Come away from that tree!"

The dog barked in an apoplectic manner, and clawed on. "Come away, I say!"

The fact that the animal didn't obey roused something in him. He really didn't care whether the dog came or not, but once a command is given—he picked up a dead branch—it looked formidable.

"For the third and last time, leave that cat alone!"

Since the dog barked more freely than before, Adam brought the stick down across his back. The weapon crumbled into several pieces, but it was a fine blow. Adam felt triumphant as the dog yelped and moved off several yards, tail between legs, though not convinced.

"Let that be a lesson to you," said Adam, and looked around for another stick, but he couldn't find a sound one, and the dog seemed to know it. He crept back to the tree, and began to worry the cat again. Adam left them to work it out together and went on up the hill.

He had no reason for going, except that he had been there the day before. He sat down on the same root and admired the same view toward the same apple orchard. How intimate the orchard now seemed, even in the distance! He knew just where his tree was, and though he couldn't see the pile of hay, he knew how it rested against the trunk.

Up the path toward him came the dog, quite at ease and obviously friendly. When he reached the open shelf in the hill where Adam was sitting, he commenced to

sniff around, as he had done yesterday at the spring. Adam saw nothing to sniff at, but the dog was perplexed—wanted to share news, or ask advice; he stopped in front of the man, looked up, wagged his tail, and then stood facing toward the path to the woods. "Go on!" said Adam. "Go ahead; see what's there!" The dog whimpered, wagged his tail again, and looked up at him, but made no sign of going on. "Stay where you are then. He doesn't mind either way." The dog only came and lay down at his feet, with his head up the path.

Adam felt himself at last in harmony with other created things. For the moment he had nothing to fear, and nothing to do, and there was some one at hand stationary and well-disposed. The excitements of his life so far began to shape themselves into a meaning, and he half suspected the truth, that the meaning is the more important end to experience. He was quite sure now why he fell on that rock—he had thought the rock didn't like him, but now he knew the rock didn't care one way or the other. He had wondered why there was a road and a path; obviously it was possible to walk across the field, and perhaps that would be shorter, but perhaps also the path was meant to show you where it was best to go. A guide to happiness, or to comfort, or to convenience. Perhaps a wise man would stick to the paths he found prepared. Somebody must have thought it all out before. The animals, to be sure, kept to the road but little—usually cross-wise. The rabbit crossed it as though he didn't feel safe; the dog always ran in the grass, and the cat traveled on the top of the wall. Matters of taste, perhaps. But Adam felt the superiority of man, who knows what was intended.

He reflected on the differences between his moods yesterday and to-day. Then life was discouraging, but now it wasn't bad at all. If you found yourself at the entrance to a difficulty, you had only to push on and come out the other side—like picking berries. Even if you got hurt it didn't last, and fortunately you couldn't remember it. The taste of berries he could recall now, but not the scratch of the bush.

The thought prompted him to pick some berries, and he immediately revived his memory of the scratch. "Queer that a branch so innocent in appearance," he began, but looking closer at it now in the full sunlight, he saw along the stem certain sharp points, set at intervals. It occurred to him that with care a hand might reach in and keep away from the points.

He had accomplished it all by himself, using only his mind. In future he would look first and then think—or perhaps he ought to think first and then see—which had he done, anyway? He wasn't sure. But the process, whichever it was, might be applied at once to the mystery of water. He had felt all day that water in the throat would be agreeable if it could be got there without strangling. Half-way down the hill the dog followed, but then got ahead of him and ran to the spring. Adam saw no occasion for speed, but he did want to see how the dog managed it. The tongue-patting process was of course not to be imitated. But when the dog gave his attention to a minute pool, a hole in the mud, a foot-print, perhaps, filled with water, Adam had an idea; if he could lift up a little water out of the rest of the water and so get it to his lips, but not to his nose! He put his hand down, pulled it up again, and drank.

How the world was coming on! Yesterday he had known so little, to-day so much! What would he be like to-morrow? "Progress, that's what it is!" he said. "Life was well enough when it began, but each day it's better, obviously. No doubt the improvement is partly automatic, but as I grow wiser——" He took another drink to be sure he hadn't forgotten how.

As he stood there by the spring under the tree with this new comfort inside of him, with his peace of mind, and the friendly dog attending, he thought of the apple tree and of the inadequate bed on which he had passed his first unhappy night. He assumed, of course, that he must sleep there again, but he began to wonder whether the bed couldn't be improved. Why not more hay? His only reason for limiting himself to one pile was that the hay seemed to come in units, but why not two or three? He would experiment at once, while he was in the successful vein. Already he was starting down the road when the dog dashed through the gate and made for the orchard straight across the field. "Just like an animal," Adam observed, but he liked the dog's company. "After all, it's not impossible to cross the field," he reflected. "I might do it once by way of exception."

Before he had got through the gate and caught up, the dog had entered into extraordinary relations with the cow. The cow was trying to eat, and the dog was coming up and nipping at her hind legs. At each nip the cow cavorted in a heavy fashion, moved off and ate again till the teasing drew near. "Come away from that," called Adam. The cow seemed impressed, but the dog not. Adam continued his walk. "When they ignore you that way," he said, "the thing to do is to put your mind on

something else. I suspect that no man should ever argue with an animal." He was slightly irritated, just the same, but as he reached the orchard the dog came racing up, out of breath, in high good humor. "It's nothing but the play instinct," said Adam. "Once you see it, you can understand animals. For them, life is neither art nor progress—it's a game. The cow and the dog were enjoying themselves in their own way, and I was stupid to interfere. So with the cat up that tree when the dog barked at her. Of course, it wouldn't be to my taste——" He thought of the mouse between the cat's teeth, and put the question away. His hypothesis was too fresh and too attractive to damage.

In the shorn grass near Adam's hay-bed, the dog seemed to be having a fit, leaping around something and whimpering. Adam picked up a stick and hurried over. Close to the ground he saw a small green snake. Without the slightest hesitation he smashed its head in. It looked harmless, but he had no regrets whatever—on the contrary! "I can preserve myself," he said. "It's an instinct."

That evening he laid him down on a triple thickness of hay, at peace within and without, and the dog slept at his feet. In the middle of the night he awoke with a terrible start. The horse was singing almost on top of him. But when the song continued, he had to laugh at his own mistake. It wasn't the horse—it was the dog, and the song wasn't directed at him; it was aimed away, into the darkness somewhere.

"Lie down, and shut up!" said Adam. His tone was severe, but his heart was relieved. By night as well as by day it was a good world.

IV

ADAM'S third day was devoted, against his will, to the education of his heart. Those avenues of feeling were opened through which beauty reaches us, and along with beauty, ugliness and horror. He pronounced it a bad day.

When he awoke in the morning, the dog was gone. He had slept later than his habit, perhaps because the sky was overcast, or perhaps because the bed was comfortable.

He missed the dog. He began to understand the advantage animals have over men, in point of speed and range of locomotion. There was the cat, for example—up and down trees, and along fences as fast as she wished; and the dog, all over the meadow in a second or so—he might be at the other end of the world now, so far as Adam knew; and the rabbit with its astonishing scurry, its quick turns, its adroitness in getting into a wall; and the cow—but here the idea broke down. The cow had no speed. She was essentially a local creature—perhaps the horse was.

He stopped for berries along the road, and after a scratch or two recalled how to avoid the thorns. But there really weren't berries enough! At the present rate he would clean off these bushes before many days. He found himself imagining a hungry world, and the vision made him eat all the faster.

A drop of water fell on the hand which had reached

into the bush—another drop fell on his shoulder—he looked up and saw rain. It made him feel that he ought to be getting somewhere, so he walked on. It was a nuisance, the way the road stuck to his feet, but otherwise he was excited with a new pleasure; the rain on his body was delicious, not too cool, just right. Once more he pronounced it, "Though wet, a good world!"

At the spring the animals were huddled under the trees; that is, the horse and the cow were. The horse was back again, looking weary and disconsolate—the cow was as serious as ever. They seemed not to care for the rain, but beyond question it improved their appearance. The cow's legs began to show natural color, and her skin was shining. Adam wondered if rain improved him. Not that it mattered much, since there was nobody to notice the difference. He felt lonely again.

Slowly he climbed to the open place on the hillside. As he sat down on the maple root there was a sudden thickness of rain, and then the water stopped falling, only the leaves dripping. Down across the field he saw sunlight on the orchard, though nearer it was still raining. When he looked up for an explanation, there was a break in the clouds—blue sky coming through the gray storm masses. The beauty fascinated him. He had never seen such color in a meadow.

The sun was out again everywhere, and the whole world set itself in motion. He marveled that there could be so many birds, and all singing at once. Down the path from the hill the water began to collect in a tiny stream; he could hear it gurgle over the small pebbles, and see the waves catch the sunlight and sparkle it up in little beads.

Just beyond this small river he noticed in the grass a

touch of color, a lively blue, like the sky a moment ago. He had not yet examined grass closely, though he was familiar with it, but now he got down on hands and knees, parted the blades and felt among the roots. There it was —a blue flower. He didn't need to ask whether it was friendly; enough to look at it and enjoy the pure blueness.

Still on his knees, he straightened up and gazed around. "This," he said, "is my day for sensations—not fears, but feelings." Rain on his body, light on the meadow and in the clouds, beauty at his feet, this frail exquisiteness he might have stepped on—of course he didn't make the distinction all at once, but already he felt in a vague way the cleavage between the pleasure of eating berries, drinking water, resting on hay, and the pleasure of looking at things. It came to him that you could use the bushes so—not to gather food, but to contemplate their color. The spring too. And the trees. And the hay. Perhaps the animals, like the cow—no, he had looked at the cow, and she had suggested no flower-like delight.

There was a scurry in the grass beside him, and his friend the rabbit appeared, inspecting the landscape cheerfully, head up. Either he recognized Adam or he had decided not to be afraid of the next man he saw. Adam made the creature part of his argument. "Now there's a beautiful animal, sure enough—pleasant to look at, and soft to touch. Why ask what else it is good for?" He held himself motionless till the rabbit came within reach. Stealthily he picked the soft creature off the ground, and when he had got a firm grip on it, lifted it to his breast and caressed it. To-day it wasn't frightened. It lay trustfully in his arms, and his own heart went out to it,

so frail, so innocent, and he so strong and intelligent. He marveled that it had found him so far from the cave in the wall. When he considered that it had pursued him secretly and modestly out of dumb affection, he decided to carry it home. The distance would be nothing to those twinkling legs, but he wanted the pleasure of holding that softness as long as he could.

Very carefully he stepped down the path, trying not to shake the rabbit. He suspected its trustful mood might come to an end on a slight excuse. He took the road, keeping to the smooth parts. It may have been only the imaginings of his quickened spirit, but the rest of the world seemed unusually attentive. The cow was actually at the gate and stuck her head, horns and all, through the bars as he went by. The horse ignored them, but that was because it had got into the middle of the field as soon as the rain stopped. On the smooth part of the wall the cat was sitting, licking the under side of her paw, and rubbing the top of her head with it. As Adam passed with the rabbit in his arms, she put her paw down and leaned her head forward with marked curiosity. Adam disapproved of the expression on her face. What she saw seemed to do her no good.

Half-way to the little cave in the wall he heard a crashing through the bushes on the left, and the dog came bounding at him. He was startled, and so was the rabbit. Such a frantic wriggling began! The dog danced around them, barking furiously. "Lie down!" said Adam. But the dog missed the idea entirely. "This is the play instinct," thought Adam. "It's very noisy. Perhaps I ought to put the rabbit on the ground, since he seems disposed to join the game, but I've been giving in

to these animals right along, and this time I'll have my own way. I insist on carrying this rabbit."

The dog grew bolder. Adam would have been glad to thrash it if he could have laid hold of a stick, but if he leaned down, of course the rabbit might get away. Nothing to do but push on through the noise. When once the rabbit was at home again, there'd be a reckoning.

But as they drew near the cave, the rabbit's impatience increased, and the dog's violence. "There!" said Adam. "Enjoy yourselves, you two. For once I've carried out my intention to the end." No sooner had he put the rabbit down than the frightened morsel made a dash for its hole, but the dog got there first and turned it. The rabbit took the wall in one leap, and the dog followed across the field. Adam had never seen anything move so fast. "I dare say they won't come back for hours," he said. "Animals carry their lighter moods too far. Some time in the night that dog went off on a journey, and now the moment he's home again, he has to race that rabbit."

Once more the sense of loneliness came on him. He could recognize the mood at sight now, and he knew in advance the effect of it. He was not surprised that the sunlight became less brilliant. He was sure that flower on the hill was less blue. "When you're lonely," he perceived, "all things change color." Yonder was the horse in the center of the field. To be frank, his color had not changed.

Since he was headed now toward the orchard, and for no other reason, Adam thought he might as well go on and see what the rain had done to his bed. It was a great progress in experience that he began to anticipate discomfort. That night he would miss the dog, but there

was no reason why he shouldn't get his sleep, and though it was pleasant to walk through the rain and be deliciously washed, it remained a question whether wet hay would be agreeable to lie on. He would find out now.

No, as he feared, it wasn't agreeable. But the wet hay had all stayed on top—the mound was dry down beneath. He found that out by sticking his hand in, accidentally. Strange to say, the dry hay was cooler than the wet. He could think of no explanation, and deferred the inquiry till later. Of course he could solve the mystery, but there was a time for all things—at the moment he must arrange his sleeping quarters. The simplest way, obviously, would be to lift off all the wet hay, and then gather a little of the dry from the inside of the other mounds. It didn't take long. He indulged himself in a generous pile, and lay down to try it. Admirable—but a drop of water from the branch above fell straight into his eye. He stood up and examined the tree. Hanging from the under side of every branch were small drops waiting to fall on him. He foresaw a long night. Well, the plain course was to move the bed from beneath the tree. He began to move, but the ground in the open was sloppy. When he put the hay down and tried it, he imagined the damp coming through. He got up again. His best ideas came to him standing. . . . Why not carry some hay up to that clearing on the hill? The idea was revolutionary—it had never been done—but the peculiarity of the hill was that water ran off it.

He was making for the road with a bundle in his arms, when the dog ran up with something in its mouth. Even before he saw what the something was, he felt unpleasantly faint, and dropped the hay. The dog stood

before him unabashed, holding up the rabbit, with its neck broken.

Adam's knees were ready to collapse. He wanted to cry out. If he had had a stick in his hand, he would have killed the dog, but now he could only stare into that face, turned up to him for judgment. Murder was written there, where he had read friendship—murder and shamelessness. Those wicked eyes apparently counted him an accomplice, perhaps were expecting praise! When he made no offer to accept the trophy, the dog laid it at his feet, and once more looked up. Could the little body still be living? Adam knelt and examined it closely—the dog put its head down too. Then he took up the soft shapeless thing in his hand—no, nothing could be done for it. . . . A strange sensation crept up his back through his head and behind his eyes—small drops of water began to roll down his cheeks.

His sobs interested the dog, who began to howl sympathetically. The last straw, for the dog to join in the mourning! Adam got up and went looking for a stout branch, the beast close at his heels. Such attachment at the moment was embarrassing, and it took so long to find the stick that the first zest for it was evaporated, but he did strike the animal across the head. The dog slunk away cowed, and watched him from a distance; then it followed slowly when Adam went back to the dead rabbit.

The rabbit's eyes were still bright and shining, he thought, but their expression was changed. He lifted it by the ears and looked for that friendship which had delighted him only an hour ago. He couldn't find it. There was something fixed—was it hate? Or fear? Whatever it was, it was in the dog's eyes too. He looked

behind him at the crouching hound, to make sure. Did they all wear the same appearance? Could the dog have been afraid of the rabbit? He remembered the small snake he had killed yesterday.

Well, think no more of it! There was a dark strain in life, and he never could take it again as simply as he began. How pleasant that first day had been! A few scratches from a berry bush, a tumble on a slippery stone —to call such mishaps tragic now, after this violence and death! He had thought the dog loved the rabbit as he did. Was it a mistake to put the small creature down just where the dog could chase it? He tried to prove to himself the dog would have killed it anyway. It comforted him to think murder inevitable.

But he preferred not to see the rabbit again. With his stick he scraped up the sod, and the dirt under it, enough for a grave. He was interested to observe how far he had to dig before the rabbit would go in, and meanwhile the dog's conscience permitted it to stand by and sniff at the fresh earth. He covered the spot with turf, and stamped it down hard. The dog looked at him a second, as if for a command, and then began to paw the grave up again. This time Adam's stick was in his hand. The dog fled howling up the road.

He gathered another armful of hay, and struck into the meadow toward the gate and the spring. He no longer cared much whether his bed that night should be soft, but he couldn't sleep again in the orchard, near the grave. Not that the orchard was to blame, of course, but he could see that places changed with the the things that happen in them. From now on, no good would come

out of the orchard. On the hill the dog had been gentle, and there the rabbit, poor thing, had sought him out and come to his hand. He heard a noise in the grass behind him, and when he turned, it was the dog, subdued but tenacious. Adam put down the hay, picked up a stone or two, and threw. He was disappointed to miss, but the gesture at least discouraged further overtures—the dog departed to the side of the field and over the wall. Adam picked up as much of the hay as he could, and went on. Though he was unaware of it, the horse moved across the meadow at a dignified pace, and began to eat the hay he had dropped.

The sun was very bright now, toward the end of the day. It would have been more decent, considering what had happened, if the world had put on a sad appearance. "Everything is cheerful except me," thought Adam, "and except the rabbit and the dog, of course, and the dog seems only puzzled. If I forgave him, he'd wag his tail at once. . . . How can a world look so kind and be so full of animosities? If I judged by appearances, I'd think everything as harmless as I am myself, carrying this grass. . . ."

A heavy footfall made him turn around. He expected to see the dog again, but the horse was following him, intent on hay. Adam scared the animal into a sudden stop, head up. There was murder in those large eyes, too; Adam recognized the look. He stooped down quickly for a stone, but couldn't find one. Exasperated, he stepped forward quickly and struck the horse as hard as he could on the end of its nose. When it reared, he was terrified, but when it came down, it galloped away.

"Now," thought Adam, "unless I meet the cow or the cat, there's nothing left."

Getting through the gate, he lost more of the hay, and the bed he spread at last, near the maple root, was the thinnest mattress he had yet tried. But with the animals in mind, he preferred not to cross the field again.

V

In a sense Adam's fourth day was the beginning of his maturity. When he woke up, he took the world for granted and gave his attention to himself. He was very stiff. After he had got to his feet, with difficulty, he contemplated the wisps of hay which had served for bed, and perceived how unsatisfactory is a natural, artless life. The cow and the dog, of course, lie down artlessly, with earth beneath them and nothing softer. "Well, let them," thought Adam, unaware what consequences his discomfort was inaugurating.

As he walked toward the spring, the stiffness in his legs diminished, but motion supplied no remedy for a sharp pain which caught him in the neck whenever he turned his head. It was inconvenient, because he often wished to gaze this way or that, and to stop and aim his whole person cost time. Berry-picking was quite out of the question, and stooping down to drink was excruciating and futile. He went to the pasture bars and leaned on them; the standing posture favored his muscles.

Neither the cow nor the horse was there, and he didn't look for the dog. Empty and safe, the meadow spread before him. Needing exercise for his health, and seeing no danger, he decided to get his bed ready for the night. To be sure, the morning had just begun, but he wished to get the hay across the field while the path was clear.

Up to that moment, whatever had happened to him had been child's play. It was as though life had tried him out

easily for three days, and then had decided to go ahead full speed. Later he remembered the acceleration, and speculated on its cause, but at the moment he knew only that something or somebody became violent.

The loneliness of the meadow, once he was in the middle of it! When he recalled the adventure in old age, he said the birds all stopped singing simultaneously, to watch him, and the silence was trying. He walked faster than was necessary, and when he reached the orchard, he gathered up less hay than he had intended; an inner voice suggested haste. Coming from under the trees, he put his foot in a hole and nearly fell; it might have been the grave of the rabbit, desecrated, but he put off investigation.

Half across the meadow he heard once more the heavy step behind him, and knew the horse had come back. When he turned, the horse stopped, but showed no fear —didn't raise a startled head—had no intention, apparently, of retiring; simply lowered its awful mouth in the direction of the hay, and stretched out its neck. Adam dropped the hay, and at first prepared to defend himself, but when the animal showed no desire to begin the attack, he wondered whether a gentle approach might not tame it, before its savage nature got beyond control. He would pat it. At the first stroke, however, perhaps because the nervous hand was heavy, the animal started off at a brisk walk. To keep up, Adam ran. The horse ran. Suddenly the wild thing thrust out its teeth, kicked up its heels, and galloped noisily around the field. Adam turned his stiff neck like the slow hub of a wheel. Without warning, the horse dashed toward him, stopped a few feet away, stuck its head down, kicked its heels, and took to its

mad circles again. When it was at the far end of the meadow, Adam thought best to go quickly toward the nearest stone wall, and sit down there, choosing a clear place where the shining vine would not be disturbed. From this distance he could watch the gyrating horse and study its habits, so far as behavior so chaotic could be reduced to reason. But the horse had no more habits—it stopped running and began eating the hay. Adam decided to let the hay be eaten.

From the distance, to the right of the orchard, he saw the cow enter the field, walking briskly, as if she were going somewhere. He had never seen an animated cow before. She moved with unaccustomed unity; her head was raised, and her body, over night as it were, had grown compact. Well, after all, why shouldn't the world and its creatures change from time to time? Adam perceived that stability, at least in matters of appearance, is a large assumption. The new cow, besides, was an improvement on yesterday's cow—there was more sense to it, somehow. Unmindful of the horse, he walked over to meet her for a better view.

She was much larger than he had realized—indeed, he wondered how he had reached the top of her back. And from that tremendous back the bony ridge had disappeared. . . . Her placid nature had disappeared too —she was pawing the ground most unpleasantly, as though she disapproved of something. Adam thought he would now return to the pasture bars and resign the field to the cow—it seemed wise. He tried not to walk too fast, but the cow was following faster than he could walk; without debating the matter he ran for the gate, but the cow gave one bellow, and came after him with

her horns lowered. There wouldn't be time for the gate; he preferred the wall, just at the place where the cat had climbed a tree to escape the dog. That safe branch, if he could only remember how the cat got up to it——

He and the cow reached the wall, you might say, together. For once he couldn't be gentle with the shining vine—he wriggled through it, pulled off most of the leaves, and was wrestling with the tree trunk when the cow made a wreck of the fence and came at him. Adam sat astride the branch, torn and breathless, and watched the animal stamp the ground beneath. It didn't occur to him that the cow wished to commit murder; he realized with pity that she had gone crazy.

For an hour or so he waited without great impatience, for the cow was interesting, from the vantage point of the high bough, and he had no desire to get down, but after a while he began to suffer a novel discomfort in his wrists and his ankles—a kind of burning which demanded to be scratched. The trouble spread to other areas of his body; such agony might force him off the branch, he feared, into peril of the cow. Very carefully he reached down and rubbed the places that hurt, but friction gave no relief. What he needed was water, the cool spring to bathe in. He wondered what the cow would do to him, at the worst, if he pretended not to notice her, and boldly descended; at the moment, however, she was stripping the bark off the tree with the point of one horn, and he was led to hope that if he stayed where he was, the malady would cure itself, just as the stiff neck had disappeared in the pressure of more violent excitements.

While he was nursing this philosophical balm, he heard a familiar sound—his enemy the dog barking across the

field. Since the dog had not followed the cat up the tree, he hoped it wouldn't pursue him either, but really he had almost come to the point where it wouldn't matter—his whole skin was on fire now, every bit of it covered with little spots. But the dog paid no attention to him or his skin. It got around behind the cow, and in between yelps it tried to bite pieces out of her hind legs. When she turned and lowered her horns, the dog slipped around and renewed the attack. Adam admired the strategy; it would be simply a question which got dizzy first, and the dog evidently knew its own powers. The cow, realizing that she was beaten, rushed at the dog carelessly—even left the tree, to Adam's delight, and chased her tormentor across the field. Adam saw her no more.

But it was another two hours or so before he came down. He had lost all confidence in cows. She might be lurking for him, and, after all, in the tree he was alive. And when he did decide to risk it, he didn't know how to reach the ground. Already his memory was vague as to how he had got up, but even if he had recalled every motion, climbing and unclimbing a tree were evidently not the same thing done forward and backward. He decided to lower himself from the branch until his feet were as near the ground as he could reach; then he would drop gently. But before he got his feet lowered, he came off the branch altogether, and the distance to the ground turned out to be surprising. He lay quiet in the grass a long time, to be sure he wasn't broken into small pieces, and when he sat up at last, his head ached. Otherwise he was much as before—wrists and ankles still itched.

Whether or not the fall had injured him, he knew he must have a soft bed for the night, and he remembered

the abandoned hay. Would he get some more now, or would he first bathe in the spring? Better bedding first, he decided; the spring was reliable, it never got stolen or eaten up, but hay must be captured early and closely watched. To avoid the cow, he went by the road and came at the orchard round-about. All the historic spots had to be passed—the place where he began, the wall where the rabbit had lived, the cart-rut out of which the cat had jumped up and spit at him, the berry bushes. Since dawn he had had nothing to eat, but the bushes were stripped clean, and besides, the new pain was worse than hunger. He came to that hole where he had tripped; yes, it was the former grave of the rabbit, excavated no doubt by the shameless dog. He was sorry he owed his present liberty to an animal so depraved.

On the return he was too burdened to see anything. Resolved not to be cheated of a bed this time, he struggled up the road with two mounds united in his desperate grasp. Some of it may have dropped in the path, but enough remained to justify his pride as he staggered into the clearing on the hillside. To rest his arms he put it carefully down, and looked about for the softest spot—anywhere except the space he slept on last night. But where were those remnants, those wisps, those crushed fragments of his late inadequate couch? Not a vestige of them. The clearing was as tidy as though it had never known hay. He hadn't the slightest recollection of removing any; he had walked off that morning with the intention of adding to the pile before night. Very disturbing! He spread the new bundle adroitly and tried it. Not half bad. But he wished he knew what had become of the rest.

Well, in his wrists and ankles the pain was active again. He went down to the spring and tried the water —then he tried the mud, which at first seemed a cure— then he lay on the wet grass—then he got himself altogether into the spring—then he began to freeze, and got out. As far as he could perceive, the pain adjusted itself remarkably to new conditions; nothing really interfered with it. He wanted to tear his skin off. Perhaps this was what made the cow so violent. Perhaps, after a little while, he would go crazy, too!

If he could only get some sleep, even though the sun was still up. That hard ground last night had spoiled his rest, and to his other inconveniences, hunger and pain, was now added a certain heaviness in the eyes. If he could sleep, he could forget! The thought took Adam up the hill again. But in the grass on the near side of the clearing he happened to notice another blue flower, dozens of them, in fact, like the single one he had discovered—how long ago was it? The lovely things distracted him for the moment, and kneeling in the cool sod he examined them one by one. Whatever they were, they were alive, like himself and the animals, and they could grow, as he and the animals could not; these had come up out of nothing in two days. He asked whether they would spread and cover the whole meadow, give color to the world, and crowd out other things, the cow and the dog, for example. He wished they would. Flowers didn't bark, nor bite, nor, so far as he could see, try to kill each other. Moreover, they seemed at peace with themselves; surely they never had a burning skin. Adam wished he had been born a flower.

Well, he would try the spring again, before retiring.

In retrospect the mud had helped. . . . In fact it didn't, so he went up the hill to bed. Where he had left the new soft mound of hay, he found the cat sitting motionless, looking at him. Not a shred besides!

It didn't occur to him that any one could have taken it away, because he, of course, was the only intelligent being then living. The horse might have eaten it, but then the horse hadn't been there. The cat was there, but the thinness of the cat spoiled the hypothesis. Adam ceased to inquire who took it; he didn't care whether he survived the night; he hoped, in a general way, he might never see another dawn. If this wasn't the worst world yet known to man, a complete botch, no matter how you looked at it! In short, he was unusually tired, and much annoyed.

VI

He didn't close his eyes all night. How could he, with his skin burning? At least he believed he was awake. If he hadn't been, would he have known what he was doing? He lay there on the hard ground, looking up at the sky, and thought. Chiefly about the changes which would have to be made in the world before it was perfect. In a perfect world food would be gathered without hurting one's self—and there would be enough food —and there would be a certain variety.

This last was a bold idea, and he was proud of it.

In a perfect world the animals wouldn't try to kill you; they would be friendly—at least in a negative way. They might even be companionable.

He wished he had a companion.

In a perfect world there would be less grass and more flowers. In fact, to put the whole landscape into meadow just for the benefit of horses and unmannerly cows was preposterous. Flowers would be a delight to man, like the blue things near him in the clearing. But they might be of more than one color.

And in a perfect world a man would have a place to sleep.

He went over these ideas several times. Sleep was necessary, he could see that—but companionship for the waking hours was essential. Here he had been accumulating wisdom for several days; he hadn't said a word. If there had only been some animal with the disposition

and the ability to listen. At this point his ideas became profound, or mixed, and he had to retrace them several times to get the general direction. He asked himself why a companion seemed desirable, and why he had thought of a companion at all since the animals were so obviously individualistic. Of course the horse, the dog and the cow met in the field, but as far as he could see, their social relations were meager. How had he come to think of something so outside his experience? It stood to reason that the ideas you have ought to follow from other ideas. If he wanted more food, at least he had had some food already. If he had imagined flowers of many colors, it was after enjoying blue flowers. But to live in this solitary world a long time, as he had done, and then to think of a companion—as though it were possible!

He went over these ideas again several times to be sure they were straight. But perhaps that's why he thought of a companion, just because it wasn't possible. Perhaps the ideas we most prize are the contrast, or the reverse, as it were, of the things we actually encounter. Then perhaps if he had seen flowers of many colors, he would prefer them all blue. Or if he had had variety and quantity of food, he would have envied a simple life where one starved on berry bushes. Or if he had lived with a companion days and days, weeks and weeks, he might have wished to be alone. But this idea was ridiculous!

When he first lay down the sky wore an evening color, but as he pursued these thoughts it grew brighter; the sunset-red changed to morning-blue. Here was novelty! He quite forgot his discomforts and sat up. The hill

was flooded with sunshine; the unexplored path invited him. To his own surprise, he walked rapidly and evenly through the trees. Without exertion, though he was climbing all the way, and quite before he was prepared for it, he marched in a smooth green region, surrounded with walls higher than his head—he didn't notice how he got in—slender trees, cone-shaped, along the walls, and in the center a round pool with a spring in it splashing up instead of down, and about the pool, cutting the ground into patterns, rows of flowers of all colors, all shapes, all sizes. He walked between the rows, and the ground was exquisitely soft.

First of all the flowers caught his eye; he spent less time over them than they deserved. Just how the water in the spring could leap up as high as his knee he meant to inquire, but the question drifted away from him. The garden stretched out—he couldn't guess how far—he must see what was at the end against the cluster of dark trees—not shade-giving trees with branches and a trunk, but dark to the ground. In front of them something white was standing, white and slender. At first he thought it was another man, but when he had come nearer he changed his mind. Not so good-looking as a man, but the creature obviously had a charm of its own.

"Are you a companion?" he said—or tried to. The words made no sound, and the creature looked at him startled—perhaps at his moving, silent lips. Adam felt immensely sad, with no great reason. Perhaps if he touched this strange animal gently—or perhaps if he pretended not to notice——

But just then the creature turned out to be the cow, his old acquaintance, gazing at him with her head folded

back over her shoulder. He wasn't surprised; he forgot her recent attempt to murder him. He reached out his hand—but the cow suddenly was the startled horse drawing back its head to avoid the friendly gesture. The horse certainly! Adam saw that nothing could be more natural. But he hoped the animal wouldn't run around the garden, through the flower beds. The horse did want to run, but he must have shared Adam's sense of fitness, for he began to gallop up and down the meadow. The garden vanished completely. Adam realized it was all for the best, and this time he knew the horse meant no harm; merely the play instinct. But when the beast suddenly came straight at him, he couldn't move a foot, and the horse had no intention of turning aside—perhaps it wasn't the horse, but the dog, about to kill the rabbit.

It wasn't the dog, after all. It was the moon looking down at him through the trees. He was back in the clearing on his hard bed; his body, where it didn't burn, was sore, and he wondered how long it would be till dawn. This darkness he had seen before, the second night when the dog had barked and woke him up, but that time he had gone to sleep again, and now he couldn't. The moon was large, he noticed, quite round. He wondered why there was only one moon—two would give more light.

Strange, that never having seen in the world an example of companionship, he should have imagined—but he refused to go over that ground again.

In fact, he tried to think of nothing; to lie still, and be simply a part of the night. The moon moved so fast he could follow it—and he began to enjoy watching the white disk creeping past the branches over him. When it was nearing the top of the hill, the birds began to make

a pleasant stirring noise, a soft shiver through all the treetops, as though the world were waking up. And toward the orchard he noticed a faint blush along the edge of the sky. It made him wonder whether the light would separate again, and whether he could reach the garden once more, up the path. When he thought of that creature, however, and the successive changes into cow and horse and dog, he decided to stay where he was, and leave well enough alone. The solitude was bad, but apparently there could be something worse.

At last the moon disappeared completely, and the birds stopped their first chorus, but they still twittered from moment to moment, and the light kept on growing. Adam would have been deeply interested if his eyes hadn't bothered him—the strong light, perhaps, made it hard to keep them open. He found it exasperating. Just as a point of gold showed above the distance beyond the orchard, he fell asleep.

When he woke up, broad day was beating down on him, and some one stood in the path at his feet. It was the creature he had seen in the garden. Adam was rather sorry she had come back, and resolved not to like her if he could help it. The animals had deceived him too often with a show of friendliness. She was almost as tall as he—much softer and whiter, and her hair was long. Dark brown hair—rather attractive, he thought. This was a part of the deception, he supposed. When he got to know her better, she would betray herself. Her face was not squarish like his—it had length and a pleasant roundness. And her eyes made him feel cheerful. When he woke up she was smiling. He made the effort of his life to be on his guard.

"So it's you," she said. "I wondered which of the animals brought up that hay."

"I'm not an animal," said Adam. His first statement to any human being.

"It wouldn't hurt you if you were," she said.

He liked her voice, but not her ideas. After a moment of silence, he got up and dusted himself off.

"It *would* hurt me—it would be unworthy. I am a man."

"I see where you've been in the ivy," she said. "And you look as though you hadn't had enough to eat."

She sounded very sympathetic.

"Are you a companion?" said Adam.

"No, but I might be, if occasion offered. Are you?"

"I am looking for a companion," he said.

"Yes, but are you one?"

"You don't understand what it is a man wants."

"I'm afraid I begin to," she said. "I was looking for a companion myself. Come up the hill with me and I'll get you some food." She held out her hand, but he drew back. "Don't be afraid—I shan't bite."

"Then you're the first thing that hasn't tried to," he said.

They went up the path side by side. Adam looked at her out of the corner of his eye, for safety's sake.

"Are you Lilith?"

"How clever you are to guess!"

"I knew you the moment you spoke."

"You know my name," she said.

PART TWO

LILITH

LILITH

I

LILITH had built herself a shelter near the hilltop, a tent of broken boughs, and a couch of green branches, hemlocks covered with grass. Adam was inclined to stay outside the tent, fearing a trap, but the bed lured him for a moment. He felt of it with his hand.

"Try it," said Lilith. "It's not bad."

He stretched out on it, very seriously. Lilith from the doorway laughed at him. She laughed deep in her throat, and the sound was agreeable. He got up and joined her outside.

"It's extraordinary," he said. "Where did you find it?"

"I made it myself. Come on in and sit down."

"If you don't mind, I'll stay here," said Adam, choosing a smooth rock several yards off.

She laughed again.

"How did you think it out so quickly?" he said. "For several days I've put my mind on it, but I got no further than hay."

"Oh, I didn't think it out," said Lilith. "The ground was hard, I wanted something soft, the branches looked soft—so I pulled them off the tree."

"I'm relieved to hear that," said Adam. "It's an elementary kind of perception, more instinct than reason. No doubt it's your way. I'm for reason myself."

"I'm for a comfortable bed," said Lilith. "Have some berries."

From the corner of the tent she brought out a handful.

"Where did you get those?" he said.

"They grow on bushes, all around here."

"Yes, but how did you get them away from the bushes?"

Lilith began to laugh again, but stopped herself.

"I gathered more than I ate—it's a good idea to have some on hand. And if you want ordinary food, for a substantial meal——"

As she stood before him, he was troubled with a certain difficulty he had in removing his gaze from her. This was a serious matter. His thoughts rose above food.

"When I consider that you arrived after I did——"

"Wouldn't you call it an accident of nature?" said Lilith. "Some one had to come first."

"Exactly," said Adam. "It was a man."

"It was an accident," said Lilith. "It might just as well have been a woman. It might better—if it made any difference. I could have got the place ready for you."

She sat down on her pleasant couch inside the shelter, and looked out at him on his rock. Her eyes, he thought, were making fun of him.

"No," he said, "there's a meaning in life, nothing is accidental. When you're older you'll understand. I came first, and I don't like to think of the responsibility."

Lilith came out and sat on the grass beside him.

"It must be terrible," she said. "I hadn't thought of it. You're to look after all of us!"

"As I see it," said Adam, "it's best to accept what each of us is born to. I didn't choose my lot."

"Whoever chose it for you did pretty well, don't you think? You wouldn't prefer to be a woman?"

"Certainly not!" said Adam.

"No man would," said Lilith.

"Wouldn't you say that proves something about man?"

"It does," said Lilith. "How soon after you came did the animals arrive?"

"Oh, they were here already."

"Then you weren't the first? You might just as well have been. I was hoping you were."

"Not at all," said Adam. "That would have been ridiculous. Life ought to be better as it goes along. The animals first—then man."

"And then woman," said Lilith.

Adam rose to his feet.

"It's more comfortable over here," she said.

Adam pursued his thought.

"You think there's a special meaning in woman's coming last?"

"My, no! Woman's coming last was like man's coming first, it was an accident."

Adam sat down again, still at a distance, and stared at the ground. Lilith stretched herself on the grass, and watched him. He declined to look at her.

"Did you know all about it before you met me," she asked, "or are you thinking it out as you go along?"

"I don't pretend to know very much," said Adam. "I've——"

"Oh, but you know a great deal. You're a clever man. I saw that the moment we met."

"I was going to remark," said Adam, "the best any of us can do is to reflect on our experience. There's no other source of wisdom."

Lilith sat up and moved over toward him.

"I'm so glad we met," she said. "We are natural companions. You have the gift of reflection, and I've an aptitude for experience."

"Have you a garden?" said Adam.

"What's that?"

"It's a smooth green place, with a spring in the center, and flowers growing in rows, very orderly."

"How nice!" said Lilith, stretching out on the grass again. "I never saw one. I don't think I'd like it. The flowers are orderly enough."

Adam concealed his disappointment.

"Where did you see a garden?"

"See here," said Adam, "I almost forgot the most important thing."

He got up and walked boldly over to her. She looked up at him cheerfully.

"We ought to decide at once how we're to share this world. It will save trouble later."

"I thought you wanted a companion," said Lilith.

"I do," said Adam, "but meanwhile we might either of us want privacy. Perhaps you don't understand it as I do. For several days I've been enjoying the companionship of the animals, and every so often I've felt the need of solitude, to retire within myself and think."

"What about?" said Lilith.

"At that time, it was about the animals."

"Now it will be about me," she said. "You can retire within yourself whenever you like—we don't have to arrange the opportunity beforehand."

She got up and walked toward her bower.

"You're not offended, I hope," said Adam.

When she turned round, she looked as though she were trying not to laugh.

"Dear man, whenever you wish to be alone, no doubt it will be good for both of us. I myself don't retire within myself, but that's because I don't know how. Do you do it by reason, or can a woman learn?"

"You're offended, I can see that," said Adam. "You have no occasion. I meant only to suggest that you take part of the world for your province, whatever you want, and I'll take the rest. You can choose first."

She sat down in front of him, uncomfortably near, and he wished her eyes weren't so friendly.

"Nothing could be fairer," she said. "Why not keep what each has already. You keep your house, wherever it is, I'll keep this modest shelter of mine."

"But I haven't a house," said Adam.

"Nor a bed," said Lilith. "Just what was it you wished to divide?"

Adam looked away from her and straightened out his thoughts.

"I suppose I was thinking less of specific details than of the world in general."

Lilith raised her eyebrows.

"How odd!" she said. "But you're a very clever man. I didn't know there was a world in general. When I saw you I was thinking how lonely a woman can be, even in so pleasant a life, and then, there you were! I

knew you were the one I'd been waiting for. A man and a woman can't be lonely, or if they are, it's the fault of one of them. Of course it must be my fault."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that."

"Well, it's nice of you to take the blame."

"I didn't take the blame," said Adam. "I can't follow your ideas, you skip around so!"

"Is this one of the moments when you retire within yourself?" she said. "I'll leave you, if you like."

She didn't move.

"Perhaps I'd better go," he said. "In a sense this is your home."

Lilith laughed most agreeably.

"In a sense. But don't be silly! I thought we could be true companions, always together, sharing whatever we have. There's room for us both in this little house, or we could enlarge it——"

"That wouldn't do at all," said Adam. "As I've known it among the animals, companionship begins very well up to a certain point, and then——"

She looked for him to go on, but he couldn't.

"Of course you know best," she said. "But then why were you looking for another companion? And have you and I reached the certain point so soon?"

"I was lonely," said Adam, "I wanted a companion with whom I'd never reach that point. I thought there might be some one who could understand me. A man can't find what I wanted among animals."

"Why try to find it there?" she said. "You ought to know better. You said yourself we were superior to the animals."

She began to laugh.

"At least, you said you were."

So far as he could judge, there was nothing hostile in her tone, and she wasn't even annoyed at him. She walked slowly and as he observed very gracefully into the hut, and began to tidy it up. He watched her put away the berries, as though there would be no further demand on her hospitality. It was a good time to go, but he had no wish to move. In some respects she was an unsatisfactory person, but on the whole interesting. He thought of several remarks which would be effective when next she spoke. When she had finished with her house, however, she came out and sat down near him, looking away and humming a cheerful tune.

"Well," he said, getting up, "if this conversation is at an end——"

"My goodness, we don't have to talk all the time, do we?" said Lilith. "I was just beginning to enjoy it. It's marvelous how well we understand each other without words."

Adam stood in front of her, and insisted on being serious.

"I was about to say—that is, if you had been interested to ask why our companionship had reached a certain point—I was about to remind you that you disagreed with me, just as the animals did."

"Never!" she cried. "You're quite mistaken. Our thoughts are as one."

"I said I liked a garden, and you said you didn't."

"Why, you never said you liked one! You asked me if I had a garden, and I haven't seen one, but I like the flowers as they are. You're just trying to pick a quarrel—you know I agree with you. Don't you?"

She stood up, and he was afraid she was going to put her arms around his neck, but he got out of the way.

"I've learned another thing," he said. "It's no use arguing with a woman, either."

"No use at all," said Lilith. "I agree with you. You know, I love you."

"That has occurred to me," said Adam. "You refer to the higher form of companionship, don't you? It might be possible between harmonious minds and spirits of a certain fineness."

"Very likely," said Lilith. "Meanwhile, one fine spirit can love all by itself. It's the higher form of loneliness."

"Now that doesn't seem reasonable to me," began Adam. "If some one else loved you, you could love in return, but it would be silly to do it all by yourself. While I was with the animals I loved nobody."

"You were very wise," said Lilith, "but the question is how soon you will adjust yourself to your improved condition."

"To which?" said Adam.

"Don't you find the world better every day?" said Lilith. "Don't you believe in progress? First the animals, then man, then——"

Adam declined to see the point.

"I suppose you haven't had time yet to look around," he said, "you've been so occupied building your house. Have you visited the spring? and the road? and the orchard? Perhaps you prefer to stay up here."

"I'll go anywhere you like," said Lilith.

"That's not what I mean," said Adam. "I was only wondering if you wouldn't be happiest on the top of this

hill, your home, and I could take the lower part, the meadow and the rest of it."

Lilith seemed about to laugh again.

"You'll let me come down to the spring for a drink?"

"Of course," said Adam. "Go and come as you wish. I was only arranging for your comfort. The hill is dry, and it's full of berries, and there's this house on it——"

"I thought it the best spot," she said. "I liked the wildness. Now, if you'll take my advice, we'll have the home right here, and whenever you want to be alone, you can go everywhere else and I'll stay in the house, or if by chance you wished me to come along, I would."

"And when you wish to be alone?" said Adam.

"I shan't, but it will happen to me," said Lilith. "You will retire within yourself."

Adam sat down again on the rock.

"You have a way of repeating my phrases," he said. "It's very disconcerting. You make me overconscious of every word—I ought to be spontaneous and natural with you."

"Oh, but you are," she said, "and with experience you'll be more so. Your phrases couldn't be improved—that's why I borrow them."

"How do you know what will occur to me with more experience?" said Adam. "You came after I did."

"Dear man, don't you know a woman begins with more experience, of one kind, than a man ends with? When you began about dividing the world, I thought you knew, and were discussing this difference between us. You're cleverer than I am, but—you don't mind my saying it—I've a feeling I shall always know more than you. It's my misfortune."

"If a man's clever, he'll learn, won't he?" said Adam.

"I wonder," said Lilith.

"What's that kind of experience you have more of?" said he. "Let's see if I can learn."

"All I can tell you," said Lilith, "is that it's a kind of experience, and you can't get experience by talking about it."

"Of course, if you're going to keep it to yourself," said Adam, "you can pretend to know more. If you don't talk, how do you get experience?"

"Men have to get it, I suppose, by living—by trying everything, by making mistakes, by trying again. It must be slow work—that's why they have so little, even at the end."

"And how do women get it?"

"Some never do, but the interesting ones are born with it."

Adam rose and started down the hill.

"I've enjoyed the talk. I'll come again some time," he said.

"Do!" said Lilith. "We haven't yet divided the world."

"We needn't worry about that," Adam called back. "We're sure to divide anything we put our minds on. If I see it one way, you'll see it another."

"Don't you believe women are born wise?" said Lilith. "I'll never be so frank on the subject again. The next time we meet, I'll use my experience on you."

Adam stopped and turned round.

"Fine idea! Let's see what it's like."

He had almost disappeared down the path when she put her hands to her mouth and called.

"Adam—see here!—is our companionship to be all conversation?"

He looked back and put his hands up.

"What d'you say?"

Lilith waved at him, cheerfully. He turned and fled.

II

"But why do you want me to visit the orchard?" said Lilith. "Yesterday you wished me to stay in my own province, this hill, and to-day you ask me to take a walk."

Adam was enjoying a hearty breakfast in front of Lilith's cottage.

"You misunderstood that idea of mine—I didn't mean you must stay here. I only wished to define our province, which is a very different thing."

"My province is to pick berries, I can see that," said Lilith. "Have some more."

She brought them to him, but his pride was touched. He licked his fingers carefully and stood up to go.

"You said you'd come anywhere with me, and I wanted to show you the meadow and the road and the——"

Lilith put her arm through his, and started him off down the path. Her nearness produced sensations entirely new, which he suspected weren't good for him.

"Silly!" she said. "Didn't you know I was waiting to be asked?"

"I did not," said Adam. "My intention was to surprise you."

"I'm surprised now," she said, and hugged his arm close to her.

Adam thought best to disengage himself. She became interested at once in a small creature scurrying through the grass.

"Oh, there goes a rabbit!"

"You must be mistaken," said Adam. "The dog killed it."

"Did he? He naturally would. Don't you love them?"

"What?" said Adam.

"Dogs and rabbits."

"There's only one dog," said Adam, "and it's vicious. There was one rabbit, a pathetic creature, not very intelligent. The dog killed it."

"I'm glad there are plenty of rabbits," said Lilith. "Dogs will hunt them."

"You didn't hear what I said—there aren't plenty. The dog killed the rabbit."

Lilith stopped in the path to look at him. She was puzzled.

"I heard what you said, and I believe you. One rabbit is not dead. I just saw a rabbit running from us, and I'm convinced it was not the dog's victim. That makes two rabbits. There had to be two, anyway, to start with. I've a feeling there will be plenty."

"Why must there be two, to start with?" said Adam.

Her look of amazement caused him to regret the question.

"Don't tell me you don't know why! You're trying to tease me!"

"Am I?" he said. "I suppose I am—in a way."

She stared at him a second, then caught his arm again and hurried him along with her.

"Don't waste time," she said. "It's a happy day—it will be short."

Apparently she wanted to run, but he conceded noth-

ing brisker than a smart walk. They reached his sleeping quarters, the hill-shelf above the spring.

"This is my house," he said.

"And you chose it with your eyes open, having seen better!" said Lilith. "Poor man!"

"Look here," said Adam. "You seem to make no distinction between the dog and the rabbit—you like them both, in spite of what the dog did."

"Of course. The dog will hunt the rabbit, but since nature arranges things that way, it's none of my business. Never let nature worry you, Adam. I don't understand it, but the world still seems wonderful. The dog pursues the rabbit, the bull tries to kill the dog, no doubt the innocent-looking rabbit is dangerous to some feebler thing, and man is quite a hunter himself. Just see how he treats women! Come on, where's that spring you were going to show me?"

"No," said Adam, "we'll sit down here and talk this out. You've made several remarks I'd like to have explained. I'll take them up in order. You say the bull tries to kill the dog. Is the bull an animal?"

Lilith stretched her beautiful tall body on the grass, this time not near him. She turned her face away and didn't reply.

"I'd like to know if it's an animal."

"Don't be foolish," she said.

"Is it foolish to wish to learn?"

She gazed at him with the amazement she had shown in the path.

"If you really don't know——" she began. "Adam, man! Where have you been all this time?"

He didn't know how to answer, and she saw his confusion was genuine.

"Of course you wouldn't know—I like you for not knowing! But the first time I heard you speak, you misled me—your manner was terribly experienced. Yet you're innocent as a——"

Adam felt better about it.

"If you have your own reasons for not telling me——" he said.

She came over and sat on the maple root beside him, and took his hand in hers. The perplexing sensation returned, but this time he thought he would bear it stoically —it might wear off after a moment.

"You know," she said, "we were talking about the rabbits—two to start with. It's that way with all the animals—with the cow, for example."

"Ah, that was my mistake!" said Adam. "I thought there was only one cow, and she went mad. How absurd! It was the other cow, quite different in character, which chased me up the tree."

"Did you have to climb?" said Lilith. "That was the bull."

"How the cow must hate it!" said Adam.

Lilith looked very grave.

"As nature has arranged," she said, "the cow and the bull are companions."

"They are absolutely unlike, even antagonistic," said Adam. "In companionship there ought to be a certain harmony."

"I won't say there oughtn't," said Lilith, "but meanwhile the world survives."

"Do you like murder and cruelty?" said Adam. "That's what it comes down to. Some of these animals are gentle, and some aren't. Don't you see a difference?"

"Yes," said Lilith. "I've been quite gentle with you, but you have suddenly become very rude. I can see the difference."

"My remarks didn't apply to you, of course—I spoke of the animals."

"Didn't you ask me if I liked murder? That question was personal. I happen not to like it, but I know what goes on in the world, and always will go on. Men will be cruel without meaning to be, and they will commit murder under another name."

"I don't see that," said Adam. "If it isn't murder, what is it? Another name won't do the rabbit any good."

"No, but it may make the dog feel better. Perhaps he thinks he killed the rabbit in self-defense."

Adam looked at her sharply.

"Do you approve of snakes?"

"I like their looks," she said. "Don't you think they're beautiful?"

"I do not," said Adam. "They look dangerous."

"Have you killed one yet?" said Lilith. "If you haven't, you will. The bull too. And the cow. You'll probably eat the rabbit."

"We needn't talk nonsense," said Adam. "If the world were what you think, no one would stay in it."

"Oh, on the contrary! We'll all stay in it, just because it's as it is. What we've been talking of isn't unkindness—it's nature. No animal means to be unkind, but when we have the impulse to do something or other, we can easily believe we ought to, for some broad, noble

reason. If you dislike snakes, you'll probably kill at sight the first that wriggles across your path, but you'll tell yourself it was to save other people. Then, of course, what seems unkind in nature is often our ignorance. It's really a good world, full of excitement, if you're alive yourself, and quite comfortable, when you begin to understand it."

She had a way, when she talked, of pleading with her eyes. Adam was conscious of the appeal. At first he had been interested in the cruelty of the dog, but now his attention was chiefly on this woman beside him. The instinct of self-preservation came to his aid.

"We might as well go on to the spring," he said, rising.

"No," said Lilith, "we'll stay here and talk this out. I've seen the spring. I was going to let you show me the road, and the meadow, and the orchard, because you wanted to, and to rob you of the pleasure might have seemed cruel, but I've seen them all, and they're far less surprising than your states of mind. If you go through life so timid, so cautious, so critical, asking people if they approve of snakes or what-not, as though snakes would cease to exist if they knew we disapproved—why, you'll never fit into this world, never."

Adam stood before her, lost in thought, pulling on a blade of grass.

"Then anything which is natural is right?"

"What do you mean by right? Anything natural is probably unavoidable—that's as far as I go. I shan't try to change it. You probably will. You have such a sense of responsibility, coming first."

She looked up at him a little slyly, he thought. That

suspicion of a smile made him more militant than he had intended.

"Yes, I shall try to make it as good as it seemed at first, before I knew it."

"From my point of view," said Lilith, "you don't know it yet, and I hope you won't do anything rash until your education is complete. It's enough to understand life—you don't have to change it. If you'd let me, I could make you happy. But then you would go in for improvements, and spoil it all."

"I don't understand what you're talking about," he said.

"You will," said Lilith. "Good-by. I'll go back to my quiet home."

"You needn't," said Adam. "We can walk on down the road—or anywhere else you say. I don't want you to go."

He was about to tell her how much he had missed her the day before, after he had returned to his hill-shelf. A curious loneliness, most distressing. But he couldn't—he was too proud to let her know he felt feeble, ill, or otherwise impaired. Her own vitality was notable.

"Well, I don't want to go," said Lilith, "but you seem to live on talk, and I don't. We've had what I should call a useless discussion."

"If we don't talk," said Adam, "how can we exchange ideas?"

"Come along," said Lilith, taking his arm again. "The ideas will exchange themselves somehow."

Adam stopped in the path.

"May I ask one question?"

Lilith puckered her mouth and lifted her eyebrows.

"Before I met you, and raised these problems, didn't you think of them?"

"You mean, did I have any ideas," said Lilith, "before you stimulated my mind? Yes, dear man, I had. Here they are, once for all. This isn't necessarily a happy world—I haven't noticed as yet any expenditure of forethought to make me happy. But I'm sure we ought to be happy, if we can be. I don't always know how, but one truth I never forget, that we must be happy in this world, made as it is. The animals aren't perfect. I don't know why they aren't, but it's not my fault, so I'm free to like them as they are. That's the way I feel about you, Adam."

Adam walked on down the path, and she followed, till they came nearly to the spring. He stopped again and faced her.

"If you think that way, you'll never improve."

"Do you think I need improvement?" said Lilith.

"Well," said Adam, "don't you want to learn more, as you go along, and help others to be wiser, and so make the world a better place to live in? If you accept everything just as it is, and say you're not responsible, of course there won't be much happiness."

He was quite earnest about it, and she didn't smile at him; she looked with some approach to pity at his dogmatic face, and from an arrested gesture of hers he got the idea she might put her hands on his shoulders, if he weren't careful.

"Dear companion," she said, "the world couldn't be a better place to live in. At least I'm not clever enough to improve it. I have found happiness in it already, I can foresee greater happiness, and I can suspect unhappiness,

but it's all bound together. The good things that come to me, I'll try not to miss. When they're taken away, I'll try not to complain. And if I can help it, I shan't hurt a living creature. Are you wiser than that?"

"To be a little more specific," said Adam, "what am I to do about the dog? It killed the rabbit, and I hit it over the head, but it seems to like me none the less. Am I to permit it to kill the other rabbit also? Should I have stood still and let the bull kill me? I too suspected unhappiness—that's why I ran."

"Where did the dog find the rabbit?" said Lilith.

Adam told her.

"It's as I feared," she said. "You meant well, but if you hadn't insisted on carrying the rabbit home, it would probably be living now. You put it down where the dog was sure to get it. Don't you see what I mean? As far as you can, leave nature alone."

"That sounds well," said Adam, "but how about the cat and the mouse? The cat came along that wall there, carrying a mouse in its teeth, and it would have killed the helpless creature if the dog hadn't jumped at it."

"Did the dog kill the cat?" said Lilith.

"No, it scrambled up that tree."

"And the mouse died?"

"The mouse, I think, got away," said Adam.

"Just what," said Lilith, "are you complaining of?"

"You miss the point," said Adam. "Even if the mouse escaped, I can't think well of the cat—no more than I admire the bull. I'm pointing out that the world is full of hostility, and I'm still amazed at your lack of excitement about it. The berry-bushes scratch——"

"Not if you know how," said Lilith.

"The stones in the spring slip from under you——"

"You shouldn't try to walk on them," she said. "Any one could see they're round and wet and smooth, and covered with a mossy film. The first time I was there——"

"If I get your thought," said Adam, "most of my discomforts, so far, are my own fault."

"All of them," said Lilith. "The dog has a cruel instinct, and it was nice of you to feel sorry for the rabbit, but if the rabbit were discussing the episode, he'd say it would have been nice if you hadn't aided the dog."

"How about the bull?" said Adam. "I swear that wasn't my fault. My attitude toward the cow was of the kindest, and I had only the most cordial motives in approaching the bull. The wretched thing, never having laid eyes on me before, wanted to kill me. Can you explain that away?"

"Would the murder have been more natural if he had known you better?" said Lilith.

"I don't follow you," said Adam.

"Well, did you or didn't you ever kill a snake?" said Lilith.

"I did," said Adam, "a small one."

"I know how you felt," said Lilith. "The bull felt that way toward you. And at sight."

Adam walked to the spring, and then to the pasture bars. He had intended saying something in praise of the spring, but Lilith's ideas were bothering him. She walked beside him, sweet and undisturbed, and they leaned on the gate together. The animals were not there. At least Adam failed to see the cow, the bull had disappeared, there was no dog, and the cat never once crossed their field of vision. Adam was conscious only of the

woman by his side. As he had talked to her, in their rather sharp debate, his eyes had found out the loveliness of her body. It wasn't his mood to contemplate beauty, but in spite of him, her image entered his soul. As they stood in silence now, he felt a heartache, half longing, half loneliness—he wanted something, but couldn't guess what. He would have mentioned his condition to her, but she was finding enough fault with him already—he would keep his frailties to himself. His reticence, however, made the pain worse. When he looked at her, he felt better.

"There are the horses," said Lilith. "Why are horses in a pasture always old? Of course the rest of us had to be grown up, but why couldn't the horses begin young?"

There were two of them on the left, where they had escaped Adam's notice. One had its head over the neck of the other, and they were both asleep.

"That is companionship, I suppose," said Adam.

"No," said Lilith, "it's domesticity."

III

"All right," said Lilith, "I give in. I never saw such a man. Do you always argue, and is the other person always helpless? Say anything you like about the cat. I don't care for the animal myself, but you didn't seem really familiar with its habits. My error, of course. Suppose we take a look at that orchard of yours before the sun goes down."

"Oh, not that way!" said Adam. "We'll go by the road."

"Why?" said Lilith.

"That's what it's for, that's why. A road is a place to walk on when you're going somewhere."

"So's the meadow," said Lilith. "Haven't you seen the cow walk across it?"

"It all depends where you're going," said Adam. "And if the meadow is for the cow, that's one reason why it's not for you and me."

Lilith walked back to the gate, but she stayed on the pasture side and leaned comfortably on the top bar.

"Well," she said, "if it depends on where we're going, and if the shortest approach to the orchard is across the field, as even a cow would know, you're not very clever if you let the road take you that extra distance. Haven't you ever crossed the field? I thought you said the bull chased you. You're not afraid, are you?"

"Not in the slightest," said Adam. "I've no objection to using the field, now and then, but the road is the correct method."

"Do you know how to get through the gate?" said Lilith. "Come on in—I won't let the bull hurt you."

"See here," said Adam, "you've entirely misunderstood my position. I was concerned with the meaning of paths and roads and all such aids to a destination. If nature supplies them, we ought to use them."

"You don't mean you think a road tells you where you ought to go?"

"No," said Adam, "I found you could use it in either direction. But one way or the other, we ought to use it, don't you think, since it's there?"

"If that's so, don't build any more roads," said Lilith. "Every new road would mean fewer places to go to. A road's nothing but a habit, not always a good one."

Adam got through the fence and started across the pasture.

"If you hadn't accused me of a fondness for argument," he said, "I could think of several replies, but since you don't like to argue yourself, I'll say no more. Aren't you coming?"

She was leaning against the gate, with her elbows over the top of it. A very graceful woman, Adam observed, and looked at her a second time.

"I've seen the orchard before, I don't like the road, and I'm afraid you're not an adventuresome person. You'll miss a good deal of life, Adam. All sorts of happiness, right under your eyes. I'm sorry for you."

"Don't be," said Adam. "Since I arrived I've had one adventure after another, without trying. They just come."

"Those aren't adventures—those are accidents," said Lilith. "You think it adventure to walk up and down that

road, just because you happened to do it once before. For several evenings you've slept on the worst spot around here, that hard piece of ground under the old maple. For you that's a reason why you must always sleep there. I recognize the danger to your soul, Adam. Roads—paths—tracks—habits. Perhaps I can't rescue you. It may be too late."

"You know," said Adam, "you're a beautiful woman——"

"Oh, no," said Lilith.

"I was about to say, you are beautiful, but that's no reason why——"

"Dear man, let me be unselfish and tell you the secret of my life. If what you say is true, it's a reason for anything."

"I was about to remark," continued Adam, "that though you are beautiful, you shouldn't treat others as though you were more mature than they. A difference of opinion is fair enough, and will occur from time to time, but I constantly get the impression that you are trying to lead me on."

"That's a mistake, of course," said Lilith. "Why should I of all people try to lead you? But I do detect in myself an ambition to branch out and experiment, which you apparently don't share. Your attitude toward the road gives you away. You happened to begin on it, and now you won't walk on anything else. In the domain of walking, your life is over, but mine isn't. I intend to try anything."

Adam was deeply annoyed.

"Didn't I just offer to cross the field with you? I've done it before—I'm not so narrow as you say. But when

I agreed to do what you wanted, you didn't want it any more—you wouldn't come with me, you leaned against that fence and you've been talking ever since."

Lilith heard him with respectful attention, but she still leaned indolently against the fence, and though he had no evidence to support the idea, he suspected she was smiling. An unpleasant conviction began to grow in him that she knew she was beautiful, and was facing him now to compel attention. He looked away from her, toward the spring, and she laughed, deep in her throat. When he looked back at her, with some severity, her face was as serious as his own.

"You've been wonderfully good," she said. "I don't see how any one could criticize you from any point of view. But it's on my conscience that perhaps my coming has limited your career. I notice a certain caution in your conduct, an unwillingness to take unnecessary risks. You can't, of course, with so much depending on you, yet I'm sad that responsibility should have come so soon. You must have been so much more dashing when you were free."

"I'm not aware that I've changed," said Adam. "My disposition, such as it is, has been adequate to the circumstances so far. But I find you a difficult woman. When I made an obvious suggestion, you didn't agree with me. You had to cross the field. Very well. But as soon as you knew I would, then you wouldn't. I can't say you are given to argument, exactly, for I miss the sequence of your ideas, but you do make a point of contradicting everything I say. That's not what I call companionship."

"Nor I," said Lilith. She still leaned on the gate, and apparently had no intention of doing anything else.

"It's not my intention to be disobliging," said Adam. "I'd really like to do whatever you want, but you don't know what that is."

"Oh yes, I do," said Lilith.

"What?"

"We haven't finished with the road yet," she said. "You think some one put it there to guide you, to show you where you ought to walk?"

"I wouldn't say it just that way," said Adam, "but since the road is already there——"

"Exactly," said Lilith. "Aren't you the first man?"

"That isn't for me to say," began Adam, "but——"

"Of course you can't prove it," she said, "but you feel you are. Nobody, therefore, has set you an example. You are free to begin as you like. You can walk on the road or off it. The best way would be to get accustomed to neither—try as many different things as you can. Don't you find you are repeating too much? If you're not careful you'll be the victim of habit."

"If you won't walk," said Adam, "can't we sit down somewhere? I'm getting tired."

"Try the wall," said Lilith.

"It's covered with ivy! That's where I got over, the day I met the bull."

Lilith walked lazily to the wall, and pulled off the vine with her bare hands.

"Now you're all right," she said.

Adam sat down very cautiously, and watched her resume her comfortable posture against the gate.

"Some habits, I should think, would be admirable," he said.

"Which?" said Lilith.

"Those which express a moral quality," said Adam, "such as loyalty, or constancy, or——"

"I know I don't know how to argue," said Lilith, "but aren't you getting all mixed up? If it's only a habit, it can't be a moral quality. To choose the road might be moral if there was any reason for choosing it, but if the road is just a habit, you're foolish. . . . See here —in this matter of companions—supposing you found one, you'd always be loyal to her?"

"I should," said Adam.

"I'd be glad to know why," said Lilith. "I'm not sure I like you."

"Why shouldn't I be loyal? When there's just one companion for each of us, I'd be lucky if I found her—what would be the sense of leaving?"

"I see," said Lilith. "So long as there's only one companion, you promise to love no one else. That's probably correct. But suppose you had a choice, as between walking on the road and on the meadow—suppose there were another companion?"

"Of course I'd be true to the first," said Adam.

"I want to know why," said Lilith.

"You think I oughtn't to be?"

"That's not the question—I want to know why you'd be."

Adam got off the stone, and very closely examined the wall.

"Can you catch poison from the place where the ivy has been?"

"What's the matter?" said Lilith. "Are you beginning to burn?"

"I'm perfectly comfortable as yet," said Adam, "but

I can't get the ivy out of my mind. I'll come over where you are."

He put his foot up on the lowest rail, and stood so that he could look into Lilith's face. She smiled at him.

"Of course a real man would be true to his companion, the one he chose."

"Why?" said Lilith. "I insist on knowing your reason. Do you foresee she will become a habit, or——"

"Yes, a beautiful habit," said Adam.

Lilith raised her arms to the sky.

"I knew it, I knew it—we're to be a habit! And he admires himself for it!"

"What are you talking about now?" said Adam. "Have I said anything wrong?"

"You've told the truth," said Lilith. "I was hoping you'd say you'd be loyal as long as you loved her."

"If I get the idea," said Adam, "your reason for wanting me to cross the meadow is that I've already walked down the road. I tried to remind you I've already crossed the meadow—but the point seems to be I ought to go in for variety. Nothing is to happen twice. If I ever do find that companion——"

"Haven't you found her yet?" said Lilith.

"You're the only woman I've ever seen," said Adam, "and as you know, we are just casual acquaintances."

"Go on," said Lilith. "What are you planning to do when you find her?"

"I was about to say, if I ever found her, your idea is that I ought to look for another the next day, for fear of forming habits."

"You know," said Lilith, "that wasn't my idea at all. If I were a man's companion—of course I'm just sup-

posing, because you're the only man I've met—but if I were, I'd like him to be loyal only so long as he loved me. That is, I'd like him to be loyal always, but because he still loved, not because he had formed a habit. You wouldn't like to be some one's habit, would you?"

"You've used that word 'love' several times," said Adam. "I don't know what it means."

Lilith smiled brightly at him.

"Don't you? I suspected you didn't."

"Is it an idea, or a feeling, or an action?" said Adam. "Where is it found?"

"It happens to you—you don't have to look for it," said Lilith. "You'll know all about it, sooner or later. Yes it's chiefly a feeling."

"A pleasant one?"

"You become used to it," said Lilith, "some people faster than others. At first it may make you melancholy."

Adam was interested in his own symptoms.

"For several days there have been moments when I didn't feel well. Do you think it was love?"

"When I met you," said Lilith, "you were hungry, and you hadn't slept well. I doubt if it was love."

"Some of it was poison ivy," said Adam. "Coming back to that idea about habits, I believe I'm right, in spite of what you say. If there were a choice of companions, and if a man didn't have some steady habits, he might change from one to the other."

"That's it," said Lilith. "He might."

Adam thought a moment.

"It's not my idea of comfort," he said.

"Nor mine," said Lilith.

"Then he shouldn't do it, and if habits help him not to, habits are good."

Lilith looked at him very seriously. He was quite sure she meant what she said, this time.

"If you were a woman, and loved a man, and he continued to be your companion, and you guessed he was faithful because it would be uncomfortable to change, would you call him a good companion? Would you be happy? Would you have any pride? Adam, some men are going to set too high a value on comfort. For them, habits will be dangerous."

"Do we need to worry about it?" said Adam. "How did we get on this subject, anyway? It's hard to tell what you are thinking of—most of all when you talk. I wonder whether you had a real objection to using the road, or whether you insisted on the meadow in order to introduce your notions about habits."

She laughed.

"We're not going to the orchard to-day, and the argument is closed. The question concerned me more than you, because you haven't yet found a companion."

"Have you?"

"Long ago."

"I don't see how that can be," said Adam. "If there were another——"

"Dear Adam," she said, "how wonderful you will be when you begin to employ all your faculties! So far you've investigated berry-bushes and springs and orchards, horses, dogs, cows and poison ivy, but you have still to discover what love is, and some day, I've no doubt, you will stumble on your imagination. You make me

feel very old. Of course, as you say, if there were another man here already, you could understand where I found a companion. But if there were another man, and if there were a woman who was your companion, you'd understand my thoughts about loyalty and habits. It wouldn't cheer you up to know that she'd leave you if it weren't too much trouble."

"Why must I assume she'd want to leave me?" said Adam.

"She'd be very foolish, certainly, but they do."

"Aren't there to be any people," said Adam, "who are faithful and happy—that is, faithful because they really like to be a companion?"

"Now that's better!" said Lilith. "Not simply because it's a habit. But you're talking of two different things. That's the sort of person I'd call a true lover, but faithfulness and happiness won't always go together. Their companion may leave them."

"The more you talk of love," said Adam, "the less I like the sound of it. Why think of such unpleasant things before they happen? If love is to occur, as you believe, we'll have to put up with it. Meanwhile, if I ever have the choice of a companion, I'll be true to her."

"You will have my admiration," said Lilith, "if habit or a sense of duty is not involved. In that case I'll be sorry for you, and still more for her. Come on home. You must be hungry."

"I could eat something," said Adam, crawling through the gate after her. "I am amazed how soon hunger returns. How do you explain that?"

"I haven't tried," said Lilith.

They walked up the path to the hill, and Adam did not stop their progress to argue. But his mind reverted to certain unfinished ideas.

"I meant to say, when I choose a companion——"

"Are we back there again?" said Lilith. "You're going to do the choosing yourself?"

"I think I'd better," said Adam.

IV

Adam was resting himself on the green couch in Lilith's hut. She was stretched on the grass outside. Adam had lost his fear of roof and walls, and the simple bed was comfortable at the end of the day. Especially since he failed to get used to his nightly maple roots and hard ground. He sighed a little as he rose and started down the hill.

"It's later than I thought. Good night!"

Lilith watched him without changing her position.

"You don't have to go, you know, unless you want to. There's more room in the house than I need."

Adam turned. He seemed disposed to discuss the idea.

"I couldn't think of it," he said. "There isn't room to turn round in that house of yours."

"Then we can build a larger one, any time you say, or add something to what we have. But it's silly of you to lie on that hard dirt when you could have a clean soft bed. You take the house, and I'll sleep out here on the grass."

Adam gave signs of growing interest. He came back and sat down near her.

"No, I couldn't think of that," he said.

"Why not? There are plenty of green trees, and if I could make a house for myself, you could do as much."

"Undoubtedly," said Adam. "I was dissenting from your offer to give me the house."

"You mean lend it to you," said Lilith. "We'd change about. I wouldn't always take the uncomfortable spot."

"As I see it," said Adam, "the chief objection to a soft bed is that it undermines character. We were intended to grow strong by endurance."

"This morning you told me you had grown stiff," said Lilith. "A few more nights on that bare rock, and you won't be able to walk."

"That's not what I mean," said Adam.

"If you want to lean back on the grass," said Lilith, "put this bough of evergreen under your head. There, isn't that better?"

"Thanks," said Adam. "That's admirable. . . . I meant to say that the sturdier virtues, upon which any enduring character must be built, are trained in us by the rougher experiences. I've noticed that in myself. The first day I was here, I fell into the spring, and the sudden contact with the rock was most unpleasant. But after that, the simple bed under the maple is not so bad. And when I walked on the grass the first time——"

"I should have to fall into the spring often," said Lilith, "before I could appreciate your simple bed If I slipped on those wet rocks, I'd say I didn't know how to walk on them—I wouldn't pretend I did it to build up my character. To hear you talk, any one would think I was morally your inferior, just because I provided a piece of furniture which permits sleep without aching bones."

"Don't you believe in any discipline?"

"I'm not sure I know what you mean," said Lilith.

"Well, do you intend to do only pleasant things, the things you want to?"

"Of course."

"That will undermine your character."

"What will?"

"Doing what you like."

"But I shan't, Adam—no one can do what he likes! Of course a sensible person won't look for trouble—I'll hope to get what I want—my character can mend itself when I'm disappointed."

Adam adjusted his pillow, and enjoyed the yellows in the evening sky.

"The hardships which come accidentally," he said, "don't help much; what counts is the deliberate toughening of the moral fiber. It's a preparation we owe to the future."

"Don't say it so fast—I'm left behind," said Lilith. "What are you telling me about preparation?"

Adam crossed his legs, and put his hands behind his head.

"When once you give yourself up to comfort, even the slightest, you are protecting yourself from pain, and if you protect yourself long enough, you'll lose the ability to suffer—you'll become a moral coward."

"Do you think I shall?" said Lilith.

"I was speaking in general," said Adam. "It will happen to us all. Everything we allow to rise between us and nature, will contribute to the softening. When I consider how prolonged the deterioration is likely to be, I try to delay it in myself. No doubt they will look back to us with admiration. In any event, the world started well."

"Were you always so wise?" said Lilith, "or did it come to you little by little?"

"It came recently," said Adam. "You made me think of it, with your various improvements, your house, that really remarkable bed. I foresee the result, and shall be on my guard."

"Now see here," said Lilith, "your character must have run down before you met me, or you wouldn't say anything so shabby. You're on your guard against the soft bed after dark, but during the day you rest on it whenever you're in the neighborhood. You don't deteriorate while the sun shines, I suppose. If the world is to grow worse and worse, and if it begins to slip already, it was a wretched piece of work, after all. It's little more than a week old. What will it be like by the time they look back to you with admiration?"

"I hate to think of it," said Adam.

"Well, it won't happen. The world won't change," said Lilith. "If it can keep up for a week, it can stay the same always. You won't be different no matter how long you live. Neither shall I."

"Weren't you different before you invented that place to sleep on?"

"No," said Lilith, "I was only less comfortable. As I told you, I made the bed out of some branches. The tree was changed, not I."

Adam sat up straight and looked at her.

"You either improve or you deteriorate. That's common sense. For a time I thought the world would improve—perpetual progress, you know. But logically the idea is untenable, at least at present. Later on, perhaps. I could believe the world had always improved if I didn't know how well it started."

"Is that why you think it's growing worse? If it's only a matter of logic, I don't mind; I was afraid you were disappointed in me."

"It's purely a matter of logic," said Adam. "I didn't know what to expect of you—I don't yet—so I can't be disappointed."

"My idea," said Lilith, "is that we aren't going to change. There won't be deterioration, and there won't be perpetual progress. It will always be the same world, and you and I shall feel the same way, think the same way, talk the same way, and act the same way, till the end of time."

"Obviously you're mistaken," said Adam. "I don't act now as I did three days ago, and I have an entirely new set of ideas."

"I'd recognize you anywhere," said Lilith. "You haven't changed. The nice thing about your ideas is that they make no difference in the way you behave. I can always count on you."

Adam brightened perceptibly.

"Which ideas and what part of my behavior are you thinking of? I'd like to see how I strike another person."

"I couldn't discuss you adequately," said Lilith. "But of course you're an interesting man, and I've tried to explain to myself why. You have that stability of character I spoke of, and a certain uniformity of thought which makes you reassuring for me, but a cause of concern for yourself. Or it ought to—you form habits too easily. But I haven't decided how deep you are—whether very or not at all. Unless you branch out and become more adventurous, I shan't be able to judge."

"I'm adventurous—I've told you so already."

"No," said Lilith. Her voice didn't sound severe. She moved over to his place on the grass, and sat much closer to him than ever before. He did not withdraw. She disturbed him greatly, so near. Little of the day was left, but in the dusk he noticed how beautiful she was—less her face than her whole gracefulness. Much more pleasant to look at than any of the other animals, he reflected. He would have expressed his admiration, if he hadn't remembered she disliked being called an animal. But she certainly was a different sort of creature from him—he felt he could not make the same kind of impression on anybody, not by just sitting still in a half-light and letting the curves of his body spread a charm. He doubted if he had the right kind of body. The woman was mysterious, like the animals. But, he was glad to see, much more friendly.

"No," said Lilith. "You're not adventurous. You haven't enough imagination as yet, and you haven't learned to feel."

"I feel strongly," said Adam. "If I were more sensitive, life would be too difficult. It's just right at present."

"Some day," said Lilith, "you may think otherwise. You'll remember this conversation, and admit your feelings were undeveloped. I hope you will. Otherwise you'll have no true experience of life. At present you live only in your brain, but one can do much with the emotions also."

She was so close to him that her hand on the grass touched his. It was his most thrilling contact with a living creature since he tried to pat the cow. He noticed the coincidence which made her hand illustrate her idea—

this contact was a rich sensation, quite different from thought. What it meant, however, he couldn't guess. Since it was an accident, it probably meant nothing.

"When you speak to me this way," he said, "I suspect you are not simply telling me something I don't know; I wonder if you aren't asking me to do something I haven't done. I feel you are urging me—I won't say nagging. Could you be a little more plain?"

"No, I couldn't," she said. She fell back on the grass, and lay looking up into the evening, her hands behind her head. After a moment she laughed.

"What are you laughing at?" said Adam.

"What's your idea of a perfect life?" said Lilith. "Since we're starting out, we may as well choose something we want. Of course we might simply wait and take things as they come, but on the other hand we might go at it a little more aggressively. What do you think?"

"I don't follow you," said Adam. "Isn't this as good a life as we're likely to find?"

"This world is," said Lilith, "but I refer to our part in it. What additions to your happiness do you dream of?"

"I thought you believed the world couldn't improve," Adam said. "Now you ask me to suggest improvements."

"It isn't improvement we need so much as education," said Lilith. "And I'm sure it will always be so. The world won't change, but the men and women in it will become acquainted with it gradually."

"Yes," said Adam, "it took me several days to get adjusted. But when you've learned it all, there's nothing to do but live from day to day, be sensible, and keep out of trouble. That's why I avoid artificial beds."

"How many days did it take you," said Lilith, "to learn all about life?"

"I had a pretty good idea of it after four or five," said Adam. "Now I feel entirely at ease in the world."

"My, but you're a trying man!" said Lilith. "I never expected to have to hint so broadly, and in vain."

"What about?" said Adam.

"Life. It wouldn't be nice of me to tell you right out you haven't learned a single important thing about life, not yet. So I hint. It's very wearing, because I prefer to speak right out."

"Don't hint," said Adam. "What are the important things of life which I have yet to learn?"

"They come by experience," said Lilith. "That was one of the first hints I gave you. Experience isn't a subject of conversation, as you hope; it must be lived. When you're alone, I suspect you meditate chiefly about yourself; when you're with me, you talk about the same subject. Some day, when you find the companion you pretend to look for, you'll begin to know what life is."

Adam turned toward the path down the hill.

"I haven't said or done a thing to-day but you've criticized me! If I think discipline is good for character, then you know it isn't. If I fear the world may grow worse, then you're sure it won't. If I believe I have some experience, then you know I haven't. I'd better go home."

"Yes, you'd better. We're getting nowhere at all."

Adam took a few steps, then returned.

"All right, if you know so much, what's your own idea of the perfect life?"

She began to laugh.

"Companionship—if I could find a man who knew what that meant! He would have imagination, a sense of humor, a fairly good brain, a warm heart, a gift for beauty, and an unalterable notion that I was the only good-looking woman on earth."

"Those conditions might easily be met," said Adam. "To begin with, there is no other woman."

"Why do you think so?"

"I've seen no other."

"Oh, dear me," said Lilith, "I've made no impression worth mentioning."

"As I understand it," said Adam, "you doubt if I have all the qualities you just named. Which do I lack?"

"You don't care about my opinion. You said yourself I'm not your idea of a companion."

"True, but still I like to exchange ideas. I've nobody else to talk with. It's not your fault. If you were a man, we'd understand each other."

"In that case, there'd be little to understand. If you're wise, you'd be grateful to whatever makes life seem more mysterious than it is."

"Don't get away from the subject," said Adam. "It's late, and I'm staying too long, but I'd like to know which of those qualities is recognizable in me."

"I don't know," said Lilith. "I've forgotten what the qualities were."

"You began with imagination and a sense of humor."

"What came next?"

"A fairly good brain."

"Yes, you have that. For any ordinary purpose your brain will do very well, I should think."

"You've overlooked my sense of humor."

"What came after brain?"

"A warm heart. But I'd like your opinion of my sense of humor."

"I rather count on your heart," said Lilith. "At present it can't be thought of as warm, but later, perhaps——"

"How about my gift for beauty?"

"Have you one?"

"I have—it's unusually strong. The very first day, landscape and berries and the moon impressed me favorably, on the esthetic side. You never mention such things—you're always talking about men and women, and the perfect life."

"Landscape and moon are forms of beauty," said Lilith. "And for a man, food. But that doesn't exhaust the possibilities."

"As I understand the phrase," said Adam, "sense of humor is the ability not to show that you think a thing is funny. It is to the inner man what laughter is to the outside. If, instead of laughing at you, I reflect on your condition and enjoy myself in silence, then I have a sense of humor."

Lilith sat up, alert and interested.

"Are you about to be witty? Come on back and stay—it's early."

"A sense of humor, however, is not the same thing," said Adam, "as a gift for beauty. I might be concealing a desire to laugh at some one, and yet be attracted by her appearance."

"Are you drawing on experience, or simply defining your terms?"

"Defining the terms. The best way to clear up obscurities. I didn't know what you meant."

"I was teasing you," said Lilith. "Even you admit you have no imagination."

"It depends what you understand by the word. For example——"

"No, Adam. I'd be glad to have you stay as long as you like, either out here or in the house. If you prefer, you can take the house and I'll sleep on the grass. But I must sleep somewhere, and immediately; this talk of yours has that effect—I can't stay awake."

"Good night," he said. "You'll feel better in the morning. I'm often low in my mind one day, and quite set up the next. It's a phase. I wouldn't attach importance to it."

"Oh, you wouldn't?"

"No. Recently I've felt not at all myself—that is—from time to time. A sort of melancholy. I expect to get over it."

Lilith walked with some deliberation toward her house.

"Good night! I hope you'll be worse before you're better."

"Why do you?"

She waved her hand, and disappeared through the doorway.

V

NEXT morning he stayed away from her, not because he wished to, but because he thought it best. She was becoming one of those habits against which she had warned him. His mind ran on little else than her appearance, or the last words she had said, or the prospect of seeing her again. Yet when he did see her, the meeting gave less satisfaction than he expected. That melancholy of which he had spoken, came over him—most of all in her presence; and he grew irritable and sarcastic, he feared, or at least pugnacious, at the very moment when his disposition was to be graceful. Obviously the woman had a bad effect. She was no proper companion. He would stay away.

He gathered berries and ate them, all by himself. The process was uninspiring and merely physical, after the play of words which accompanied a meal with Lilith. He walked down his familiar road and back again, and tried to revive the interest he had once taken in each bend of it. There was the place the rabbit lived—the first rabbit. There was the spot where he almost stepped on the cat. Here was the friendly tree he and the cat had both climbed, on separate but similar occasions. Here was the gate where the caterpillar had climbed on him. Memorable localities, all of them, but they had lost their appeal. Having met Lilith, he had acquired a dead past.

The cow was on the other side of the gate. He leaned on the top rail, and studied the animal, to make

sure which one it was. Ah yes, the more harmless one. The companion wasn't there. He began to wonder why it is always the companion who is formidable. If you didn't know life, you'd expect companionship to be an innocent intercourse of souls, on terms of equality. When the cow sought solitude, as now she appeared to be doing, was it to retire within herself? To meditate on the problem of companionship?

One remark of Lilith's bothered him. She had said he had no adventures, that he simply waited for things to happen. It wasn't exactly so, but it was true that he spent most of his time wondering what his adventures, or accidents, might mean. When he first arrived, he had supposed it was for a purpose, to accomplish something, though he didn't know what. Now, after so short an interval, he had got used to making the best of events, more by understanding than by action. Lilith apparently didn't wish to understand—she wanted emotion and, he suspected, commotion. She would probably be least happy when she was most settled. Well, philosophy was not to be looked for in woman.

Perhaps it was a mistake to allow the accidents of life to obscure one's destiny. Adam longed for that early but now departed conviction of his, that he had a destiny. The idea was dignified, and it germinated dignity —whenever he let his mind rest on it a moment or two, he thought better of himself. Good; he would have a destiny. Nothing remained but to find out what it was. What was he for? But as soon as he announced this question, he knew at once he had reached an end. He didn't know the answer, and there wasn't a soul on earth to discuss it with, except Lilith, and she of course didn't

know either. . . . Rather unpleasant to be the leading character in the world, yet not know why you were there, nor what you ought to do about it.

In fact, if the purpose couldn't be discovered, one might as well be an animal. Perhaps the cow there, nibbling grass, was at that very moment considering the disadvantages of a meaningless life. What thought she didn't give to her companion, she possibly concentrated on her destiny. What would a cow's destiny be like? Or a cow's thoughts? . . . Adam regretted he had told Lilith of his wisdom, of his learning everything about the world in a few days. Suppose she had had the wit to ask him what the cow was thinking of; how could he have answered? Well, she hadn't asked him. A narrow escape. To be frank, he wasn't always sure what she herself had in the back of her mind.

"Is this your notion of adventure, or is it an accident?"

She was leaning on the rail beside him—he hadn't heard her footstep.

"Where have you wasted the day, Adam? I've been terribly lonely. I know now how hard it was to be the first man, and how delighted you must have been to make my acquaintance."

He had never seen her so radiant. When she smiled at him, he smiled back, caught off his guard, but at once he turned his eyes toward the cow.

"Evidently you are probing some problem to the depths. I hope it's not me."

"No," said Adam, "it's the cow."

"You mean, the cow is a problem, or it has one?"

"Both."

"Do tell me the cow's problem."

"For a woman who profoundly and on all occasions dislikes conversation, you do excel in stirring it up. I don't know what problem the cow is considering; I can't even guess. That's why the cow is a problem to me."

"I thought you knew everything about everything; especially since you found out about cows—that they come in pairs. What you see before you is cow in the most elementary version."

He had never heard so much charm in her voice, but what she said embarrassed him. Why cow in the most elementary version?

"I know what it is," he said, "but I don't know what it's for."

"What a cow is for? Get me a pail and I'll show you. The one in my house will do—empty the berries out of it."

They got through the fence, and Adam watched her milk the cow.

"That's the most ridiculous performance I ever saw in my life!"

Lilith showed him the pail full.

"Now you've got it," he said, "what do you do with it?"

"Drink it."

Before he could stop her, she illustrated the idea.

"Won't it poison you?"

"Why should it?"

She held the pail toward him, and because he didn't wish to appear as timid as he was, he drank. She watched the expression of content come over his face.

"And you knew all about the world!"

"The world is queerer than I thought."

She laughed, and he had an inclination himself at least to smile. An extraordinary thing, milk!

"What do we do with the cow now—just leave her?"

"That's all she expects of us."

He felt relieved.

"I thought it might disable her in some way."

When he offered Lilith the pail again, she swung it lightly in her left hand, as though she thought of spilling what they hadn't drunk. He hoped she wouldn't. At the gate he took it from her till she had got safely through the bars.

"It won't do to lose any of it," he said. "We might like to drink some more later on."

He started up the hill.

"Where are you going? I came down for a talk with you—I wouldn't have explained the cow if I'd known it would end the day for us."

"I thought you were taking the milk home," said Adam. "Of course I'll stay."

She had put the pail on the ground, and was leaning on the fence, facing toward the cow. Adam went over and stood by her side. She waited for him to speak.

"The most remarkable aspect of it is the admirable foresight. To think that the cow is here to provide milk for you and me!"

"Oh, nonsense! That milk wasn't intended for us. We just took it."

"If not for us," said Adam, "for whom?"

"Don't you really know? Why, when the cow has a companion for some time, then a third animal comes

along, and wants some milk. The cow then produces the milk. That's my idea of it."

"You make the cow very obliging, with milk on demand. But there are two objections to your hypothesis. In the first place it's over-elaborate. Nothing so roundabout is needed to explain a simple fact like milk. In the second place, have you ever seen this third animal you speak of?"

"No, but if the cow's giving milk, the animal must be in the neighborhood, or it was. Perhaps it died."

"You see, you're arguing in a circle. The milk is here because the hypothetical milk-drinking animal is."

"I thought you knew the names of things," said Lilith. "The animal we are discussing is called a calf."

"Because of the calf, then—but you go on to say the calf must be here because of the milk. It's not necessary to assume a calf; you and I are here. The milk is for us."

"So you now understand the destiny of the cow! And the cow understands it too, since we've milked her! Is that the way you explain the world? Oh Adam, don't you see you've started wrong? Our destiny isn't necessarily the same thing as the use we are put to."

"Why isn't it? Aren't you going to drink the milk?" said Adam.

"I suspect you'll drink it," said Lilith. "We might as well start on back."

She took up the pail and began to swing it as she walked.

"I'll carry it," said Adam. "It's too heavy for you."

He felt hurt at the manner of her laugh, but she handed over the milk, and he carried it without spilling a drop. He was too preoccupied to talk, or to notice how

far they had gone. When they were passing his bare shelf on the hillside, Lilith pointed to vestiges of hay.

"The question is whether a maple-root was destined by the highest wisdom for a bed. I understand some misguided people put it to that use. Shrewder folk use soft boughs, yet the boughs were intended to stay on the trees."

"This is my house, as it were," said Adam. "You never stop here. Won't you sit down?"

"Did you hear my argument, or can't you answer it? Yes, I'll sit down—but I don't see on what."

"I use the maple-root, or else the ground. Unfortunately, I have no berries to offer you. Will you have some milk?"

"No thanks—but I admire the hospitality."

"The pail," said Adam, "is too full. I'll drink some of it off."

He made himself comfortable on the maple-root, but she stood against the great tree, leaning back and pressing her hands around the bark behind her. He put down the half-empty pail, startled at the tall white figure so postured, and the dark tree supporting her. For once he almost understood; before his eyes the sympathetic life struck an attitude, nature dumb and yearning permitted herself a single caress.

Lilith moved away from the tree, and sat beside him.

"What made you think of that fantastic story of the cow, her companion and a calf, all ending in milk?"

She couldn't have heard him. Perhaps she wasn't entirely comfortable. Elbows on knees, she rested her chin in her hands, and gazed down over the meadow.

"Because, you see, if anything of that sort could

happen, if an extra creature came with every companion, there would always be more of everything. There wouldn't be room."

She looked around, but said nothing.

"We differed as to whether the world is improving or running down, but in either case the quantity of it wouldn't increase. You said yourself there will be no change."

"I meant, the world won't change, nor men and women; there will be other men like you, and several women like me. But you and I'll change. For one thing, we'll grow old."

"That's a long way off. We're young now."

"We ought to be."

He wanted to ask her how, in her opinion, and at what moment, those other men and women would arrive, but on the whole it seemed best to say nothing and pretend he knew.

"When you came along this morning, I was trying to imagine the thoughts a cow would have—as distinguished, of course, from your thoughts and mine. Is it your belief the cow wants a companion?"

"Yes."

"Actually looks for one, if one is not present?"

"Yes."

"For the purpose of encouraging the arrival of a calf, and eventually providing it with milk?"

"No, that would be far from a cow's thoughts. The calf and milk are results, not intentions. Of course, I'm judging the cow by you and me."

"Leave me out," said Adam. "I've no place in that hypothesis."

"Doesn't nature take the same interest in you as in other living things? You and I are proud of our intentions—you more than I, and I, perhaps, more than the cow; but nature likes results. All the results, taken together, make up life."

"Don't the intentions count?"

He thought she looked wistful.

"Wouldn't it be nice if they did!"

Not knowing what disturbed her, he returned to the cow.

"Then why should any one look for a companion? I begin to think it's a mistake."

"No, it's a result. It's life. It's the result of loneliness. Everything begins from loneliness. Haven't you noticed how lonely even trees are?"

"I haven't. You want me to believe now that as the result of their loneliness they enjoy a kind of tree companionship?"

"Dear me, no—not companionship of any kind. The result is more trees, which in turn will be lonely. So with the cow."

Adam considered deeply.

"If they find a companion, how can they skip the companionship? Aren't you getting lost in words?"

"But they don't really find a companion."

"You told me the cow did."

"I doubt if you understood me. When the cow met the creature that chased you, she was probably looking for companionship. But nature cares nothing whether she found it. My guess is she didn't."

"Aren't you looking for a companion yourself?" said Adam. "And won't these ideas discourage you?"

"No, they belong to experience. I'll hope for a companion, and I'm prepared to be lonely."

She stood and smiled down at him. After such thoughts, he wondered that she could be cheerful. He felt infinitely sorry for her. His recent melancholy returned tenfold.

"I'm going on home. You can bring the pail back, when you've drunk the milk."

Adam left the pail among the maple-roots, and walked by her side.

"I wish you had a better opinion of life, I really do. A beautiful woman like you, with your talents, oughtn't to have such notions. Not at your age."

"What notions ought I to have? And at what age should I begin? My opinion of life is better than yours. Nature's a mystery, but a beautiful mystery. Why pretend it's clear and simple, neatly done up in definitions? You waste your time defining—you ought to live. Have you touched any experience yet by thinking? I doubt if nature is adapted to our meditations."

They walked in silence.

"I haven't asked before—but how am I to know when I have lived, when I have touched experience?"

"You'll know," she said, "if ever you are really lonely."

"But I am! Before I met you, I was looking for a companion!"

"Nonsense! You were toying with an idea. If you wanted a companion, you'd find one immediately."

"In view of what you've been saying, perhaps I'd rather not look further, but I'm conscious of extreme loneliness. It's a defect in the world, I now see, that no other creature takes my point of view, or entirely

shares my problems. I don't mean to criticize the world, but it has that defect."

"Naturally."

He considered further. Perhaps the thought which now occurred might sound ungracious.

"It has that defect—yet for that very reason, I'm inclined to fall in with your theory that other men and, I may say, other women are yet to arrive. My conviction is that any great aspiration of the human spirit is to be fulfilled—the fact that we have the aspiration is the best reason for believing nature has already provided the fulfillment."

"That sounds plausible," said Lilith. "When the bull chased you, you wanted to get away from him, and that's why you did."

"The parallel," said Adam, "seems out of tone."

"The dog helped you a little, didn't he? Are you sure he meant to help?"

Adam's feelings were hurt. Besides, he couldn't think of a firm reply before she went on.

"When the dog chased the rabbit, your idea is that the rabbit had an aspiration to be killed?"

Her method of argument was too abrupt. She had a rough way of pouncing on the irrelevant idea. A moment ago he had suggested the aspiration of a soul, and here she was, involved with a dog and a rabbit. They were in front of her house before he said another word. In fact, she spoke first.

"I'm sorry you won't come in. Good-by. We may not meet again for several days."

"Why not?" He was surprised at the concern in his own voice; he disliked that emotional sort of thing.

"I've decided to look for a companion," she said. "Time flies, I'm not so young as I was, and there's nothing here. Don't bother to return the milk pail—I shan't need it again. I may not come back."

Adam felt himself weak in the knees.

"You oughtn't to go."

"That's your point of view. You believe in waiting for life to come; I'm for going to meet it. I've enjoyed knowing you in this early stage, before you have even begun. It's the first case of the sort I've seen—perhaps it's the last. Good luck!"

Adam felt a congestion in his throat. He wanted to cry.

"Lilith," he said, "when I think of your unhappiness, what you've missed, not finding a companion, and so fine a woman in your way, I'm awfully sorry!"

"Well, that's better than nothing, but don't worry about me. There are some berries here in my house—eat them before they're too soft. You might as well use the house too, after I'm gone. If you still condemn the bed, throw it out."

"I won't do anything of the kind, and this looking for a companion is all nonsense! Now see here——"

But she had slipped away, and he couldn't find her.

VI

When he woke up next morning, he had a bitter heartache, and for a moment he forgot why; then he remembered she was gone. He lay still for a while, and thought about it. Usually he would rise at once and look for food, but now the idea of food was gross. He would feed rather on his grief.

He couldn't satisfy himself as to the reason of her departure. When they had met yesterday, she had seemed as permanent as he. Her decision to leave was sudden. On the other hand, she had spoken of the arrival of certain other men. Had she been brooding on the prospect, all the while she was talking? And had she concluded to find a companion among these intruders? If she wanted a companion, why hadn't she chosen him?

The heartache stimulated self-examination. Perhaps he hadn't let her know how satisfactory it would be to have her continue on the hill. Perhaps the poor woman feared she was in the way. Now, that was a mistake—she hadn't been in the way at all. He wished he had reassured her. In fact, though not a companion in the highest sense, she was a remarkably agreeable person to have around. At least she was somebody to talk to, and she had a way of raising questions which were at first sight difficult to answer, and by the time you had the answer, you knew a good deal.

Then she was pleasant to look at. Perhaps one shouldn't dwell on such matters, but she was apparently

soft all over, so far as one could judge by the eye—soft and white, with the faint blush of color under the skin—if she weren't so large, she would make him think of that blue flower in the grass. But she was pink and brown, not blue. And in spite of the softness, she must be quite strong—she walked faster than he, her step was much lighter, she was amazingly rapid; the way she had milked that cow!

Somehow her looks were mingled with the sound of her voice. When he thought of her appearance, he could hear her speak. Such a deep tone—no, not always deep; at times, when she was arguing, it rose to the upper part of the scale, and gave the impression of sarcasm. He ought to have spoken to her about it. And once or twice he had detected a slight nasal quality. He should have called her attention to that also; it's not necessary, not for a beautiful woman, to talk through the nose. But on the whole it was a good enough voice—he wished he could hear it again. Really, it was a haunting voice. There was feeling in it, and it made you feel. Perhaps her reflections would not have seemed so important if conveyed by other sounds. Her laugh, of course, was annoying—she laughed so much, and usually over nothing at all; but the sound was superb, deep in her throat, reverberating. If she had known what to laugh at—but it wasn't her fault; he had neglected to tell her.

When first he had imagined the desirability of a companion, he had dimly foreseen the chance that, having one, he might once more wish for solitude. But he hadn't thought of being left this way. It would have been better not to have met her, if she was only temporary. Now he was spoiled for the animals. Before she came he had

got on with them well enough; in a few more days he would have learned how to manage the bull and the horse, and he would have come to some understanding with the dog, but how could he go back now and begin over again? Something in him had softened—Lilith was one of those comforts which induce deterioration. She ought to stay, or she ought never to have arrived. What right had she to divert him from an obviously sane and happy course of life?

But he couldn't put much heart into these criticisms. The fact was that he missed her. Also he was hungry. She had invited him to finish up the berries in her larder, but that was impossible, of course—it would be painful to visit the house, if she were not there. He'd gather berries for himself, as on the first days of his loneliness. Indeed, he might as well go back to the bushes near the orchard, where he once made a habit of finding breakfast.

When he reached the place where the rabbit had gone over the wall to escape the dog, he heard a loud munching inside the field—it was the horse, also intent on breakfast. It was two horses—the companion was in evidence! Adam turned the fact about in his mind, and considered it from all sides. Just at this moment, as if by way of irony, two horses! He was distracted from his hunger, didn't notice how empty the bushes now were, started back not much better off than when he came. Two horses! Perhaps this was the season for discovering companions, and Lilith knew it. How wise she was! Every one would have a companion—except him. He began to feel desperately unhappy.

The day, he noted, set up a strong contrast to his for-

tunes. Never had he seen such glorious weather, nor caught so poignantly the smell of earth, and the strange damp smell of trees. Light was above every leaf, and beneath it too; the green was luminous even at the side of the road, where the grass and the bushes met. It occurred to Adam that for the experience of great sorrow, such as his, cheerful scenery was inappropriate. Let no one say nature sympathizes with man! He wondered if he ought not to look for a gloomy spot somewhere, and grieve harmoniously.

The only gloomy spot he knew was the brief stretch of the road where he had first met the cat. There the ground was a bit swampy, deep shaded, and the thought of the cat pervaded the neighborhood. But when he had retraced his steps, large patches of sunlight were ruining his gloom, and the swampy atmosphere had evaporated. He would try the spring. He would sit down on that wet, greenish stone, with his feet in cold water, and think of Lilith. But he had forgotten how cold the spring was—and a long black neck thrust from the wall, and two malign eyes stared at him. It was the cat—one of them. For a moment he confidently expected the other. Ah no, this wasn't companion day for cats.

There was probably a meaning, if he could think it out, in the solitary appearance of the cat. This one animal he had considered too little, partly because she hadn't interfered with him, and partly because he didn't like her. Yet she too, no doubt, had a destiny. Was loneliness for cats an affliction? Did it result in an aspiration toward the comradeship of souls? If so, what would be the result of that aspiration? What queer fancies Lilith had!

But the fact that he was face to face with the cat now, at this critical moment, must be more than a coincidence. There might be a guiding principle in it, or perhaps a rebuke, if he could guess at the true interpretation. For example, if he had spent more time—but at this point the dog came out of the bushes with a rush, and the cat was up in the tree, spitting down, before Adam had checked his meditations. Just what they had done before! Neither had learned a thing! The dog still thought he could surprise the cat, and the cat was still afraid. Didn't they profit by experience?

He stepped out of the spring, and left the two creatures snarling at each other. This was nature, toward which Lilith was so respectful! Oh, well, it was no use disagreeing with her, if she wasn't here. He climbed to his shelf on the hill, sat down on the maple-root, and wondered what to do next. What an empty world!

Twice that day he walked again along the road, and once he went as far as the orchard, but nothing happened to him. He reverted to her complaint, that he never sought adventure, and he confessed at last he didn't even know how to look for it. The world into which he had been put was narrow and petty—nothing in it but berry-bushes, cats, dogs, horses, a few birds, one caterpillar and cows. A surviving rabbit or two, perhaps. What could a red-blooded man do with that sparse equipment?

Before night he found more berries, but by that time he really had risen above food. He was so lonely, he even thought of looking for the bull, and patting it affectionately, and so ending his days. Or he would sleep—that would be a method of forgetting. But the evening

was too lovely; the world seemed to demand his attention on the colors of the sky, the magic light on the meadow, and the soft happy sound of the birds. After sundown he did fall into a troubled slumber, for a minute or two. Perhaps for several hours. There was the moon above him, not entirely round this time—he noticed the imperfection. The hill was ghostly in the yellow radiance—he wasn't certain he was really awake. He would have been glad of another dream, if Lilith might walk in it. But on the stillness he heard the pleasant sound of the cow at her food. This was the real world, and he felt again a real heartache.

Sentiment mastered him; he rose and went down the hill, through shadows and moonlights, and leaned on the top rail of the gate, where she had stood with him. The cow was nibbling so close he might have touched her. He had an unselfish wish, that Lilith might have been there to see that unbelievable beauty on the meadow, the charm that sunlight can't bring. He knew she'd like it. He would always come here at night, and think of her. He would never get over his loneliness, never! If he did, he'd despise himself. Even though there might arrive another woman, or several, he would waste none of his society on them; he would be loyal to this magnificent bereavement, he would! And after years of silent suffering, when the effect on his character would be apparent to any one who looked on his patient face——

A soft warm hand, the most delicious thing he had ever felt, slid up his shoulder and around his neck.

"Well, how did you get on?"

He was too happy to say a word, and she appeared not to expect an answer. She didn't take her hand away,

nor did he wish her to. He had a bold impulse—to put his own arm around her shoulder. He found it was an interesting thing to do. Yes, she was as soft as she looked. He let his hand rest very lightly; what if by clumsiness he should do her some harm?

"I had to come back to see how you were," she said. "Did you have a splendid day?"

"I did not."

"Couldn't you find the berries? I left them——"

"I haven't been near your house! I've been wretched."

"Poor man, what's wrong with you?"

She looked up into his face, and he thought she leaned against him, ever so slightly. The moon was shining on her. Adam had not realized how lovely she was.

"I don't believe you've had a thing to eat!"

"I didn't want anything, not really—I found a few berries this morning. Lilith, have you—did you meet a companion?"

She looked up at him again, and he was quite sure this time she leaned against him.

"I'm not certain yet—but I think I've met him."

Adam's heart gave a jump and then stopped. He gulped down a frantic breath.

"Where did you go?"

"To-day? Nowhere."

She watched the effect on him.

"I spent the day in my house."

He was assisting at the creation of a new world.

"Then, if I had gone up there, I could have seen you?"

"Of course."

"Then there aren't any other men!"

"There may be—I'm not interested in them."

Well, that settled it. He'd never worry again.

"Come up to my house and have some supper."

"No," he said. "I'd rather stay here and talk. I came here to think of you."

"So I hoped," said Lilith.

"Then why did you say good-by, and tell me you'd look for another companion, and let me spend this day——"

"That's a bit hard to explain, I admit. Of course you told me I would never make a satisfactory companion for you, and you might, so far as I knew, be glad to have me out of the way, so you could look up a proper mate. Perhaps I did wrong to come back."

As she said this, her voice turned quite pathetic, and Adam knew the moment had come when he would have to break the news that he liked her. He looked down—he intended to look into her eyes, but she was gazing across the fence at the cow, and the cow, chewing a noisy cud, was gazing back. Adam was aware of a desperate crisis—he put both arms around Lilith, and made her face about and look at him.

"You'll do very well for a companion. I don't want any better. From the first moment I met you, you've—you've——"

"I've improved?" said Lilith.

"You're not very kind, you know—it was mean of you to say you were going away, and all that!"

Lilith laid her head on his shoulder.

"No, I wasn't kind. I ought to be sorry; but, Adam——"

"Well?"

"Somebody had to do something."

She smiled up at him, and her eyes were shining. He had never seen eyes so near. Nor lips. If he wasn't mistaken, the lips came nearer. Perhaps it would save trouble if he leaned down a little——

A man of his intelligence would know, of course, it was a kiss he had invented. He feared he ought to apologize.

"Darling!"

"It's very queer," he said.

"What is?"

"It's a great personal liberty, and I don't suppose lips were intended for it."

"Isn't it natural?"

He tried again. . . . It was natural.

He proceeded to other caresses, equally natural, and equally surprising, not to say astounding. They came of themselves, happy thoughts. He feared Lilith at some stage might protest, but she didn't. All her life had gone into her kisses—the rest of her was about to faint in his arms. How fortunate the grass under foot was soft!

The cow, looking at them over the fence, stopped chewing her cud.

PART THREE

PARADISE

PARADISE

I

Adam rose later than his habit. The bed of evergreen boughs was more comfortable than he had imagined, and he had been through a good deal. Life, so far, had been a nervous strain. To be constantly on your guard against the creatures around you, to be alert in the presence of nature, lest a berry-bush or a slippery stone play a mean trick, was really too exhausting. And the amount of thought he had spent on Lilith, before he understood her —well, he was glad he had taken her boldly in his arms, as a man should, without even asking her permission. A passion like his, deep and mastering, made him at one with all the divine, creative principles of the universe. It was so simple, when you got around to it—love was a solution, an explanation of all existence, a commentary on the world, a remedy for worry, an ultimate eye-opener. And he had invented it! Adam was satisfied with himself.

Lilith had risen before he woke up. He was so busy with his thoughts he had not time to miss her, till she came strolling across the lawn toward her house. In the early morning she was even lovelier than in the moonlight, but he failed to make anything of the fact; his experience with women till that moment left him free to follow his logic—any beautiful thing would be more beautiful, the more light there was.

She too was cheerful, he noticed, and there was a tender, almost a wistful look in her gray eyes. It was very gratifying. He wondered why he had ever been afraid of her. And why he had never really looked at her before. All that lovely whiteness haunted him. He would undoubtedly dream of it. What a tragic error, if he had not fallen in love!

"Do you still want me?" said Lilith.

Adam thought the question inappropriate.

"Why shouldn't I? You haven't changed."

She held up her face and he kissed her. In the middle of the kiss he realized that his remark had been a compliment. He was glad he said it.

"Dear love, some men lose interest in the woman they have won. We need to be reassured—don't forget. When you have had us at last, we are at your mercy."

Adam kissed her again, several times, to reassure her.

"I suppose you're right. There's an inequality between man and woman."

"An injustice, do you mean?"

"Oh, no, an inequality."

Lilith had her hands above her head, arranging her hair. The effort made her look as though she were smiling.

"Your inequalities don't trouble me—I've no quarrel with my lot."

"Well," said Adam, "you have no reason to."

That was all he meant to say, but she began to laugh, so he went on.

"To be so beautiful——"

"Adam, do you really love me? Say you do!"

"I do."

He tried to put feeling into it, but the sentence wasn't long enough. It seemed wise to kiss once more. . . . He was moved to observe how that woman loved him. He was through with the kiss before she was.

"When you came in, I was thinking what an extraordinary experience love is. I'm glad I haven't missed it."

"So am I," said Lilith. She led him to that smooth rock he had sat on at their first meeting, when he was still afraid of her. She wished to seat him on it now, by her side, but in his oratorical moods he preferred to stand.

"Yet it might easily have happened. I doubt if love is an inevitable part of our fate. I can imagine another type of man, less sensitive, who would spend his days content without the emotion I'm feeling now."

Lilith's elbows were on her knees, and her chin rested on her hands. She looked up at him.

"You're sure you do feel the emotion?"

"Well," he said, "haven't I proved I love you?"

She rose and put her arms about him.

"You do love me! You haven't said a word about breakfast. Sit down and I'll bring it out to you."

She went into the hut, and he knew she was preparing berries and cream. He sat down, a little ashamed of himself. Why did she always drag in the food, as though that were his chief interest? Perhaps she didn't know what his other interests were. When she came out he would tell her. But he couldn't name them to himself. Food—fear—Lilith—what else had filled his mind? . . . How beautiful she was! Why did she smile whenever he spoke of love? . . . She came out with the berries.

"When I speak of love, you smile, or you seem to want to. I don't mean to be funny."

She put the berries down carefully, then took his face in her hands and kissed him.

"What a delicious man you are! Don't you know I've always loved you? I tried and tried to make you think of it, but you were terribly slow. Now I smile when you discover something more about it. Progress delights me. Have some berries."

"No, I'm not ready for food—you don't think that's all I care for?"

"You are a great lover," she said. "You are my ideal man. Of course food doesn't matter, but it gives me an occasion to be of use to you—you've no idea how I like that. It's really a service of the spirit, and you wouldn't be so unkind as to deny me."

She divided the berries, and Adam consented to eat his share. They never tasted so good.

"Let's go pick some more," he said, "for to-morrow. I can't let you do all the work."

"We'll do it together—everything together from now on!"

Her deep voice thrilled him, and she was more beautiful by the minute. A great improvement had come over the landscape, too—it had a happy air about it. As they walked toward the berry patch, he had an impulse, from time to time, to put his arm about his marvelous woman, and she always stopped and turned to him for his kiss. His kisses were better now. Last night he had thought them an inspiration; now he knew they were an art.

She picked more berries than he did—his thoughts preoccupied him. But she liked him to stand in meditation

before the bush; she would laugh and he would come to and ask for another kiss. He wasn't aware just how they made their way back to the house.

"Now what do we do?" he said.

"Whatever you like. Everything or nothing. We can stay here, or if you say, we'll go to the end of the earth. What you like—so long as you take me with you! Were you ever free before? I wasn't. That's the effect of love. How dreadful it would be, wouldn't it, if a man and woman met, and wanted to spend their lives together, talk, walk, work together, be companions, be free like us—and couldn't!"

"That idea is fantastic," said Adam. "If they loved as we do, they'd behave the same way. Whatever else you can say about life, it's simple."

"It seems so now—to us. . . . Let's go down to the spring and look at your old friends the animals!"

In her company the animals had no terrors for him. They walked along the path through the wood. When they passed the spot where he had spent uncomfortable nights on the hard ground, she made no reference to the change in his habits. He thought it was because she had forgotten.

The spring wore a cheerful appearance, even in the shade; the stones were clean and dry, and the water sparkled.

"Somebody's been clearing this place up," said Adam. "I never saw it presentable before."

She squeezed his arm, as she stood leaning against him.

"Are you sure you ever saw it before?"

He understood what she meant, this time.

"Perhaps you help me to see."

Two horses were standing under the tree, and the cow was munching away, toward the middle of the field. Lilith slipped through the bars and walked up to the nearest horse.

"Nice old thing! I wish we had a young colt—a really fiery creature."

"Do they come more fiery?" said Adam. "When that nice old thing galloped at me——"

"You frightened it because you were afraid. You should have loved it."

She leaned against the beast's shoulder, and so far as Adam could see, the animal had no objection. He was surprised at the glossy brown coat against which her whiteness was outlined.

"Somebody's been polishing up that horse! He never shone before."

"They shine if their coats are well brushed," said Lilith. "I hate to see a horse neglected. They are as sensitive to their appearance as we are."

Adam recalled the day when he had wished for some one to look at him, but in his solitude he had grown careless; he wondered what his appearance, in her eyes, might be. He leaned against the other horse, but the animal moved smartly away.

"Shall we walk over and see what the orchard is like?"

"I'd rather lean on the gate," she said. "A sentiment, if you choose."

For a moment they surveyed the meadow in silence. Adam cleared his throat.

"Did you find out you loved me gradually, or at a particular moment?"

"Dear man!"

"Because, frankly, though you interested me from the first, my emotions became involved gradually. I wondered how it was with you."

Lilith considered a moment.

"I might as well tell you. The only question with me was how long it would take. The first time is the hardest."

"How long would what take?" said Adam. "And what is hardest?"

Lilith got through the bars and walked toward the spring.

"This conversation is unwise—I'm in danger of telling you all about women, and you'll probably run away. You never saw the brook behind my hill, did you? It's deep enough to swim in. Come on!"

Adam stood his ground.

"Tell me what you meant—I shan't run."

"Why, I knew I was going to have you, the moment I saw you. You'll find that's not unusual with women. But I didn't know how soon you would get the idea that you were trying to win me. It's hard to suggest that to a man of so little experience. The next woman will make a more rapid success of it—you'll fall a victim at sight."

"You don't mean you think I'd love some one else?"

"Don't worry—I'll understand. Men always do. They go and come. Do you know how to swim?"

"I don't."

"I'll teach you."

"But I shan't fall a victim. You needn't think so meanly of me. When I love a woman——"

"Dear man, when you love a woman, it will be because she arranged it in advance. I did. Why can't another do the same? I shan't blame you. I'll try to keep you, of course, but I'll play fair."

She started back toward her house, and he kept step with her, very thoughtful.

"When a man has taken a woman in his arms, as I did you, he can't be faithless, unless——"

"Well?"

"She might change, of course, but so long as she remained as she was at first——"

"They never do—they change. It's all right."

The idea that he might grow tired of her was deplorable. He was persuaded more than ever that he loved desperately. When he thought of himself alone, voluntarily alone, tears of self-pity came into his eyes. Lilith turned in the path and flung her arms around him.

"Don't leave me! Don't let her take you away! I love you! You'll never guess how much."

"Who would take me away?"

"Oh, the next woman you meet. We all want companions. We all want to capture our man, that's the truth, and so long as men are scarce—well, Adam, dear, you'll be very important."

"I don't see," said Adam, "why a woman should want to capture a man."

Nothing he had yet said delighted her so much.

"You are still in the state of innocency—later you will have forgotten this truth. It's a mystery. Why should a woman!"

They heard a rustle in the grass behind them—before they could turn the dog appeared, with a rabbit in his mouth. He laid the trophy at Adam's feet.

"That dog of yours," said Lilith, "is a born hunter."

"He's a murderous beast! It makes me sick to see him!"

"No," she said, "he was made for this, you can't blame him."

"Made for it, was he? What good can it do him? What's the rabbit worth now he's killed it?"

She refused to be anything but gentle and cheerful.

"It's a mystery. I'd rather have the rabbit not killed, but the dog will kill it. It's no use quarreling with an instinct."

He resolved to teach her, if words could, what a gulf stretched between their philosophies. It was high time. The embraces of love, he foresaw, would lose their spell if his mind and hers were not rapturously in tune.

"Lilith, I don't need to say I'm devoted to you, but I wish you didn't seem at certain moments hard hearted. I've never made you feel the seriousness of this behavior of the dog's. What is natural seems to you right."

"Don't you find it natural to do right yourself?" said Lilith.

Adam thought a moment.

"Or are your natural instincts wrong?"

"Of course they're right, but that's because . . . You're mixing me up. You think the dog does right when he kills a harmless fellow creature—that's what troubles me."

They had reached their house, and Lilith would have kept on toward the brook, but Adam flung himself on

the grass. She sat near him, in the midday sunlight, troubled by this last speech of his.

"Do you want to know what I really think? I think life is a work of art—a beautiful tragedy. If it weren't so beautiful, the tragedy wouldn't be so gripping. Because it's beautiful, I smile. What you can take smiling, Adam, becomes more beautiful—and more tragic. The dog is an animal—that is, he's a little crude. But he's not the only hunter. We are here, it seems, to hurt each other, though we don't mean to. Whenever life is full and running over, it forces itself upon some weaker being, and at last hurts it, perhaps kills it. I may wound you some day, and you may break my heart—yet we are not bad people, and the world will not be better than it is now."

"Oughtn't we to do something about it?"

"I think we ought to understand it. That's enough. Then we can forgive and smile."

He felt inclined to weep, as though the sun were not shining, the world were not all his, the most beautiful woman on earth were not eager for his arms. He felt her very beauty slipping away from him as she spoke. She belonged to an order of life which ought not to be thought of in terms of cruelty and ignorance; if existence were to be understood, then there must be perfect, intelligible things in it. He began to see that in her he had worshiped perfection.

"I love you too much!" he sobbed. "You are better than I am, you are wiser, you are far more beautiful! If you love me now, I'd just as lief die—nothing could add another joy. I love you so much, even my happy moments with you are a little sad. But you must let me

always think well of you. It isn't enough to understand—you ought to have confidence that life can be made right."

Her hand on his was gentle.

"I have that confidence. We'll make our own lives right. Other lives perhaps must be left to their wisdom. Oh Adam, I'm glad you feel so deeply—and I'm glad you love me."

"I always shall."

"It seems to be natural to man," she said, "to announce his passion for a woman in dubious terms. Even an innocent mind like yours, totally without experience, begins by saying he will never be unfaithful. I wonder where the idea comes from. Of course you'll love some one else. And I'll try to be understanding, though probably she will say I'm jealous as a cat. I harden my heart a little so as not to feel when you tire of me."

She started for the brook, through the woods he had not explored, behind her house. They came to a pine grove, and beyond that a small stream broadened at one place into a pool. It was a dreamy spot, and Lilith spoke more softly as they came to the water's edge. She stood a moment to do her hair into a knot on the top of her head. The beauty he saw made his heart ache again.

"Lilith—do I satisfy you? Am I an ideal lover?"

She smiled her most companionable smile.

"Dear one—you're a man!"

II

Adam came up from the meadow, and found Lilith building an addition to the house. She had gathered more evergreen branches, long and short, and had cleared space enough to double the room.

"Here, let me help you! Why didn't you say you wanted that done? What is it you're doing?"

"You're accustomed to large quarters," she said. "I've intended to widen the house ever since you came, but we've been too much occupied these weeks, haven't we?"

She looked for his kiss, and he responded, but somewhat automatically. His thoughts were occupied.

"I haven't said I was crowded, have I?"

"You've been wonderful, dear, you've never criticized my little building."

Adam gathered a few branches in his arms.

"Where do these things go? They won't stand up."

Lilith seemed pleased at his ignorance.

"You stick them in the ground, and then you weave the small branches—this way."

He imitated her, awkwardly.

"It's amazing that anything gets built in the world, it's so difficult! If I hadn't tried it myself, I'd have thought your home here cost only an hour's work."

"That's all it did," said Lilith. "Nobody helped me."

Since he could see nothing amusing in their conversation, he was surprised she laughed. She had a way of

sticking the branches in the ground—they always stayed up for her. It must be a trick of some kind.

"You hand me the branches and I'll put them up. That's it—thanks! You're very helpful. . . . I was trying to get it done before you came back, for a surprise. We ought to be as fine as we are happy. . . . Did you enjoy your ride?"

"It went pretty well to-day—the horse is getting used to me, or I to the horse. But I'm not sure I enjoy it, I'm not so clever as you. It's like the swimming—I wonder all the time whether it's worth the trouble, and it's not natural."

"It will be natural later, when you've had enough practise. You didn't fall off, did you?"

"Not to-day."

"There we are! That's a good-looking house, if ever I saw one!"

She stood off and admired the outside; then she and Adam explored it within.

"Now, when it rains, we can eat indoors. You've got over your dread of comfort, haven't you!"

He sat on the bed while she prepared lunch—lunch and water. They hadn't had milk for some time. He didn't know where she found the vegetables—either she wanted to keep it a secret, or he was stupid; she managed to gather them when his back was turned.

"How's the cow?"

"That's odd," he said. "I was just thinking the cow must be seriously ill."

"My goodness! Why?"

"I can judge only by her appearance. She isn't the same shape as she was."

"You're not confusing her again with her companion?"

"It's different this time—it's a disease that swells. About in the center."

"Oh," said Lilith. She brought the lunch over to the bed, and for a moment or two Adam thought in terms of vegetables.

"But that's not a disease. That change I noticed myself the other day. That's why I asked."

"I don't know what you call disease," said Adam. "If it doesn't stop she'll die. It can't go on indefinitely."

"It's the beginning of life, not death. That's what I was thinking of long ago, when we first milked the cow. She's going to have another calf."

Lilith spoke with a deeper manner of reverence than Adam had seen before. Having a calf was to her, apparently, a sacred enterprise.

"Well, suppose she is, why should she swell up? The calf isn't inside her."

Lilith continued her meal without replying. Adam felt in the air a rebuke; he must have said the wrong thing. Her face was serious—he thought she looked unusually dignified.

"Have I annoyed you?"

She smiled, but he knew she was still in earnest.

"I don't know why it should be, but it's hard to explain to a person who doesn't already understand. Nothing would seem to be more noble, more worth talking of."

"What is?" said Adam.

"The way we are born."

"We? I spoke of the cow."

"There's no difference."

"You think men and women begin——"

He was too deeply wounded to go on.

"I've never seen it happen, but my guess is that the cow has within her another life than her own, and so it is with all mothers. It's a wonderful idea."

"It's an incredible idea," said Adam. "I don't believe in miracles. The cow is ill."

Lilith began tidying up, and putting away the fragments. She was willing to let the subject drop.

Adam rose, stretched himself, and stepped out on the lawn.

"I admit the idea's not without fascination. If all creatures were attracted to each other by a great love, and a spark of that love, as it were, should fly off and start another life, that would be most remarkable."

"It would."

"But hardly possible."

"No, not often."

He was amazed that she contradicted her own theory. She saw his perplexity; she came out and sat with him under the shade of a small maple. Before she spoke, she turned to him for the kiss which was her reward for lunch and for wisdom.

"It isn't love, dear, it's nature. You'll avoid disappointment if you grasp the difference. I told you, nature cares only for results, not for motives. If I'm not mistaken, there'll be many lovers from whose happiness that spark you speak of won't fly off; on the other hand, if the cow has a calf, I won't conclude she has gone through a passionate romance. Perhaps a woman might have a child, yet not care much for its father. That's nature's

queer way. . . . Don't look frightened, Adam—I told you we must smile at the beautiful fate we can't otherwise change."

He took her by the hand.

"See here, Lilith—since you mentioned a woman—then we could have a child?"

"Of course."

"Shall we?"

"I don't know. Sometimes I fear not. It's nobody's fault, so I shan't worry."

"You'd like to?"

"Of course!"

"Why?"

"Dear man, you ought to know much more than you do about women, or else you ought to ask no questions at all. If you knew more, I shouldn't have to tell the truth. . . . The real reason I'd like a child, is that you'll be more faithful to your child's mother. Another woman might pretend another reason. . . . Don't let's talk of it; we're happy, aren't we?"

He wished to pursue the conversation, but she wanted another kiss.

Adam came out of the water and sat on the edge of the pool—partly because he didn't swim well, and partly because he liked to watch Lilith. She was never so graceful as when gliding through that strange element, over or under it, lifting out of the clear green mirror an arm or a rounded thigh, or half her rich bosom. This tantalizing concealment of her body was ravishing—he could watch it by the hour. And what he saw, mingled with what they had talked of.

"If the cow should have the calf, as you think, what would she do next?"

"The cow? Take care of it. Feed it, mostly. Milk."

She was stroking lazily back and forth in front of him. She had time for words as she turned her mouth up to breathe.

"Women the same way?"

She nodded as she went by—then she retraced her course and stepped out of the water, shining in the sun.

"That's all they need do—but I suppose they do more."

"That isn't fair," said Adam. "The women shouldn't have it all to do!"

"Well, if we have a child, you can take care of it. I don't think it's fair, either. You didn't see the bull around, when you were in the pasture?"

"He wasn't there."

"He wouldn't be, now. No, it's not fair."

"How long," said Adam, "do you suppose the cow has to look after the calf before it can take care of itself?"

"What a man for questions! How do I know? A month, maybe—I can't even guess. Perhaps the calf will get lost or killed, like the last one."

"How dreadful!" said Adam.

"Well, if it doesn't happen, you'll continue to do without cream for your berries. It's you or the calf."

"Is it the same length of time for a woman, do you think—about a month? That's a lot to give to each child!"

"You don't seem to have much enthusiasm for the processes of nature," said Lilith. "But as I said, you can do as much of it yourself as you like."

She was wringing out her hair and drying it—a mysterious process which Adam had not fathomed. The first day of their swimming he had offered to comb it for her, but since then she had done it herself.

"Let's go to the rock on the hill and watch the sunset."

Because she wished it, he went. She could watch the sunset, and he could watch her. But the rock was uncomfortable, as he knew—its only merit was its elevation.

"This is my idea of happiness! This world before us, this light above, and you beside me! This is my sense of life."

"For me," said Adam, "this has been a crowded day. I rode the horse—a form of exercise mentally exciting. Then I noticed the condition of the cow. Then we built the addition to the house. Then you gave me your ideas about the beginning of life in the lower and the higher animals. I am still disturbed. Then we went swimming. I'm somewhat exhausted. This sunset is going to be particularly splendid, I've no doubt, but this evening I'm not adequate to it——"

She drew his head down on her shoulder, and caressed him.

"Dear boy, you're tired. But you're happy, aren't you? You aren't sorry you met me?"

"It's life that's exciting, not you. I mean, if I'm tired, it's because the world is so difficult. Without you, I'd have given up long ago. You know, when we met I was trying to find out what it's all about. Of course after I had you in my arms, I said that was the purpose of creation."

"You've already discovered that creation has other purposes?" said Lilith.

"When you are in my arms, I still think so, but you wouldn't wish me to flatter you in a silly way, would you?"

"Perhaps I could stand a little silliness—you might try."

"I was about to say that the few glimpses I've yet had of the secret of life, makes it a greater mystery."

"Dear me, yes."

"But you're always talking of understanding it—you say you're an understanding woman."

"Men and women, after they are born—I believe I understand them. But not before—and nothing else. Why don't you limit yourself to that field? It's wide enough to occupy you. It's none of our business how nature brings us here—we can take charge after we arrive."

"Don't we take charge for the future? Doesn't it make a difference how our children are to be born?"

Lilith watched the sunset a moment, and her hand patted his shoulder, a bit absent-mindedly, he thought.

"Adam, your thought has been on your children, all day. Do you want them very much?"

"Yes. That is, I suppose every man ought to have a child. Don't you want them?"

"More than you do, perhaps. But suppose we have none. Wouldn't that be happy too? You said you wanted a companion—and so did I."

Adam took an inventory of his state. He was happy, but he was also restless. He knew already that he'd never acquire Lilith's poise, and he wasn't sure he wanted

to. He pressed her to him and kissed her passionately, but she didn't give herself with the customary flame—he even thought she tried to push him away.

"No, in a moment you'll suggest going back to the house, and then we'll talk a while in the moonlight, and I'll have so many of your kisses, we'll both be deliciously mad, we'll give ourselves up to pure ecstasy. But tonight, if we haven't thought this through together, my mind will be awake, even when you take me, dear lover; your dissatisfaction with life will come between us; we shan't lose ourselves entirely in joy. Perhaps I'm not the woman for you, but if you find another, I'll tell you this, you'll come back to me—unless you lose your sense of true happiness. You wish to be doing something all the time, you think life needs your help—or is it a rescue? If I played false, I'd pretend to feel the same urge, and we'd become eternally inseparable, busy about nothing at all, and getting nowhere. But I like to watch nature, and follow her ways, so far as they are kind, and let her follow them when they are harsh. For me, happy moments are happy in themselves. You and I are companions. If we have no child, we shall still be companions. If we have a child, after it grows up we shall be just companions again. Children are an episode, important to nature, but not essential to love."

"When you reached the end of your life, wouldn't you feel sorry if you had left no children?"

"When I reach the end of my life," said Lilith, "I hope to have missed nothing, and to be sorry for nothing. If I haven't children, it won't be my fault. But I dare say my temperament won't change—life will seem the tragedy I spoke of, beautiful but costly. One animal

lives at the expense of another, one kind of happiness kills another kind; children interrupt companionship, and the desire for companionship makes children seem less important. Why regret anything? I take my days as they come, I try not to hurt others, I call that good which gives pleasure and happiness, and that evil which gives pain, and I'd be glad at any time to have a more profound set of standards. Of course, when I saw you, I did what I could to make you want me. I'd do as much to have the children. That's what I am—can you love me, being so? You see what I have tried to say—even if you had not wanted me, I'd still have believed it's a beautiful world, I'd have put away regret. When you wish to leave me, you may go."

"I haven't the slightest notion of going," said Adam. "I never had. You're no more faithful than I am."

"Dear man, no one who's in love is faithful. The question of faithfulness doesn't arise till the love is over."

"That's too subtle for me," said Adam.

"It isn't subtle at all, unfortunately. Do you love me? We'll tend to the faithfulness later."

"I adore you just as you are! Darling! Dear companion! Of course, there are things about you I don't understand."

She laughed, and philosophy left her. She lost herself in his kisses.

But long after she had fallen into a happy sleep, Adam tossed upon his soft bed, or looked up through gaps in the boughs and observed the march of the stars. He had wished to ask other questions about the calf and about children, but what came to mind couldn't be put

into words, either because it was too vulgar or because it was too sacred. He didn't know which. How wise she was! But perhaps he never would feel at home with her kind of wisdom—as he never would feel at ease with nature, if what she said of nature was true. Was there a spirit walking through the universe, finger on lip, a vast silence, hating questions? Did it steal upon your brain and into your heart, and prompt you to conduct that you would not have chosen, actions you were not conscious of? Did it abandon you after you had done its will? Did it leave regret behind—regret, useless of course, or this calm wisdom of Lilith's?

He was awake again in the early dawn. She was sleeping with her arms flung out toward him. The fruit of his vigil was that he knew nothing could be so beautiful as the body of this woman who loved him. When her eyes opened, they met his, and the smile of his adoration.

III

The barking continued, in the direction of the spring. Adam got to his feet very reluctantly, and went down to see what the dog was doing. On the way he picked up a strong stick.

When he came to his old shelf on the hill, he found Lilith sitting with her arm around the dog's neck, restraining that animal by force and by persuasive arguments from trying to climb the tree after the cat. The dog was obviously of two minds, but the cat knew he was conquered; she sat on her branch and looked down on him with blinking composure.

"Aren't we for letting nature take its course?" said Adam. "Especially when it is harshly inclined?"

"I'm teaching the dog my philosophy. At present he behaves like you, dearest—he wants to be up and doing. Don't you, Towser?"

Towser gazed at her, panting.

"Want to kill the cat?"

The dog barked furiously.

"Well, we'll let the cat live. Lie down!"

Towser lay down at her feet.

"He does very well, don't you think? He's an intelligent animal—we understand each other."

Adam thought there must be some form of communication between them which he knew nothing of. He wondered whether to the dog he and Lilith seemed to share as intimate a language. He was a little jealous of

Towser. The dog lay breathing hard, and watching the cat.

"Tame him as much as you like, he won't stir till the cat comes down."

"He won't?"

She picked up a small stick, and after beckoning to Towser with it—weaving mystic circles in the air—she threw it down the path. The dog scampered after, and brought the stick back to her. Adam thought better of the animal.

"Here, Towser!"

He brandished the cudgel he had brought with him, and Towser put his tail between his legs. The stick whistled through the trees and stuck in some thick branches. The dog gave a yelp, looked up at Lilith, and lay down.

"You see?" said Adam. "It's no use trying to train them."

"Towser can't climb a tree, if that's what you mean—he knows you've lost your stick. You beat him once, didn't you? I dare say you brought that club along to beat him again."

Adam said nothing.

"It's an intelligent dog. Towser probably thinks you can't be tamed—you are nature in her harsher aspects."

"That's all very well, but sometimes nothing but blows will persuade Towser. That day he went over the wall after the rabbit, he wouldn't have come back at a mere call."

To sustain his pride, he reached for another stick.

"That's a dead branch," said Lilith. "Don't lean on it."

He leaned on it, to see what she meant, and the stick crumbled.

"Can't you tell rotten wood? See here—the inside—and the bark——"

He examined it closely.

"That's the kind of stick I hit the dog with. How can it be dead wood? There hasn't been time enough——"

Lilith looked behind her for an illustration.

"That's an old tree—and that. Haven't you noticed them? They weren't all of the same age at first; that would be impossible. If there weren't old trees, with plenty of rotting branches, the young ones couldn't live. It keeps the soil rich."

The cat slid down the tree, and disappeared toward the stone fence. Towser growled and got to his feet.

"Down, Towser!"

She didn't need to speak twice; he lay down.

"They all started young," he said, "but some grew older than others. I mean, they wore out sooner. If the world began at one time, you can't persuade me some of the things in it were worn out to start with. The branches that rotted were of a poor quality."

"The quality is good—as rotten branches they are excellent. No, I think they began just as they would always be thereafter—some older than others, some ready to fall, some mere seedlings. That's the way life is—and it was this life that was created."

"Then it ought to be the same way with people—there ought to be old folks and children, and some in between, to show us how the world would be later."

"For all I know there are," said Lilith. "Can you prove there aren't? Those horses aren't young, and

neither is the cow. I'm rather surprised she can have another calf. But the reason I believe some of the trees were made old, is that such an arrangement would be beautiful—it would explain life from the beginning. Whatever it is that makes us live, goes from the old into the young. When I see a dead branch, I think of the green sapling in which its soul now resides. After a while the dead wood molders back into matter from which saplings will be made. It's a wonderful circle."

"Do you mean that after a long time, the tree which grew old and toppled over might grow again in the same spot, the same tree, out of the same materials?"

"Why not? It might be."

"Of people too? After a thousand years might another man and woman be standing here, made of the same dust as you and I, with our thoughts and our feelings?"

"I'm sure of it," said Lilith. "They'll use the same words, she'll point out the same truths, and he won't believe her."

"If that were so——" said Adam.

"It is."

"Then what's the use of it? Are men and women to repeat themselves forever? Monotonous, I say! Always the same ideas, eh? Lilith, you're wrong. The world wouldn't be made for anything so stupid."

"Do you still love me, dear man?"

Adam wished she wouldn't ask questions just when he was ahead in the argument.

"Of course I do."

She put up her lips and he kissed her.

"If you think it's stupid to repeat your ideas, I was

afraid you had tired of me—kisses perhaps would bore you."

"That's not the sort of thing I was referring to."

"Yes, it is. All ideas will repeat, I'm sure—I want them to. They'll seem new—you've had several opinions you thought were original."

"They were—I'm the first man."

"I was about to say, ideas are to the mind what food is to the body. You eat one meal, and then you must eat another. Think how many meals will be eaten in the history of the world, and each will be a special occasion, some of them unique, yet they'll be as much alike as that row of maples. To the mind it is monotonous, but in experience, where you take one thing after the other, we'll find it interesting. At least I shall."

"That's all very well for the food, but men and women won't repeat themselves as though they too were so many meals, or so many ideas. We are individuals. Don't you realize you are?"

"The thought presents itself when I argue with you," she said. "Our personalities are distinct. But to some one else they might not appear so. Perhaps to nature we may only be a means of subsistence—ideas merely, a kind of food, as you say. I don't know. But we might as well repeat our experiences. The pleasure of living is in understanding the order of nature, isn't it? And one order is probably as good as another, if you understand it. You know where you're going, and you can settle back and enjoy yourself."

"I don't know where I'm going," said Adam.

"Why, you've seemed to, on several occasions. When you sit down to a meal, you know you're going to eat,

and you are free to give your attention to it. Now that you're in love with me, you know we are companions, and you can get the full quality of every minute we have together. If we have children, you'll know you are to be a parent, and you can throw yourself into that experience. When we——"

"Exactly," said Adam, "but here is where we differ. You talk as though the world went round in a circle, never forward, but if we have children, they will have children too, and so on—they'll be the parents of others, not of us. Where's your circle now?"

"I said they'd repeat our lives, and that's true. One of your sons will insist that he is original and always will be, and one of my daughters will tell him the truth. But you won't have to wait for your son. The next time you fall in love, it will be an original love-affair—you'll say it's the first taste you ever had of divine ecstasy—but it will be just like our love, dear companion!"

"Why do you drag in such impossible illustrations? You know I shan't——"

"I have you now, anyway—you're really mine, aren't you? Love has to be enjoyed now or never—it's no good in the future or in the past."

"Haven't you any sentiment? I shall always remember——"

"So shall I, but I shan't pretend I'd rather remember you than have you."

"Oh, I feel the same way, when it comes to that. . . . I suppose there's no happiness like being in love."

"If it's a happiness," said Lilith. "It's an aspiration, like wanting to sneeze. Only more sublime. It certainly

isn't contentment. Here we are, happier than either of us is likely to be again—and we've been searching for truth, and disagreeing, and having a splendid time. Haven't we? At this point you might say something, Adam!"

From across the meadow, perhaps near the orchard, a dog barked. Towser sprang up and bayed an answer. His friend replied. Towser disappeared down the path, and Lilith didn't try to stop him.

"That's what I call a complete understanding," said Lilith. "It's something for us to work toward."

"I'm more interested in the dog," said Adam. "What's the matter with him?"

"Nothing. That's what I'm talking about. His companion wanted to know where he was—and you see where he is."

"Where is he?"

She laughed, and stood up.

"He's living in the present. He's asking no questions. Love is enough."

"When he wanted to kill the cat, I thought he was asking a sort of question."

"Yes, then he was like you, dear, but now he's more like me. . . . I've a mind to go swimming."

She was in no hurry, however—he found it tiring to walk so slowly.

"Adam, do you still think I'm beautiful?"

He glanced at her, as though to refresh his memory.

"Yes, indeed! Extremely so."

They walked on.

"But why did that subject suggest itself?"

"Well, dear, not because you mention it. I doubt if

you notice me now—you're accustomed to me. It's all right—I wished to confirm my guess of the stage you've reached. I'm sure it's natural for a man."

Adam suspected no compliment.

"Is it different with a woman?"

"Haven't I told you how handsome you are? And all sorts of compliments? Didn't you like them?"

"Once or twice," said Adam, "you exaggerated slightly, but——"

"Dear heart, don't I know? I'm in love with you. You probably are an average person, but I, being mad, see great merits. Can't you exaggerate a little?"

"If I could say how beautiful I think you are, I'd say it. I couldn't exaggerate."

She pressed his arm close to her as they walked.

"That's not so bad . . . Adam, I'm starving for your love . . . do tell me I'm a fascinating woman, or anything else you can think of offhand!"

Adam was deeply concerned.

"I told you that—let me see—three days ago. I remember the hour precisely."

"So do I, and you don't like to repeat yourself, but I'd like to hear it all over again—several times."

They were at the door of her house, and she pretended to forget the swimming. She sat down on the grass, and he chose his familiar smooth rock.

"Lilith, I think of your beauty all the time."

"Nonsense! Most of the time you're arguing about the universe, or the dog, or——"

"No, really, I'm thinking of you, but we can't speak of some subjects, can we?"

"Why not? Which?"

He was embarrassed to go on.

"Of course your body is lovely, but it wouldn't be polite to say so."

"Polite? It would be heavenly."

Adam flushed slightly.

"I mean, parts of you are even more beautiful than the rest—and they're the very parts one shouldn't mention."

Lilith was delighted.

"I think I know which you mean."

"That's another thing that puzzles me," said Adam. "Why are they unmentionable?"

"They aren't! If a thing is beautiful, I'm sure it can be praised."

"Perhaps not in public."

"Isn't this private enough? Oughtn't I to be the partner of all your thoughts?"

"See here, Lilith, you never told me I was handsome—no, you didn't! You said I was an ideal lover, but nothing about my looks. You're as bad as I am."

"We don't look alike, dear—but to me you are handsome."

Adam pulled a long blade of grass, and chewed it slowly, to assist thought.

"Just handsome in general? Or do you think I have outstanding qualities? I value your opinion."

Lilith inspected him with profound seriousness.

"Would you mind standing up and turning round? . . . Thanks. . . . I suppose it must be your personality. You're very dominating."

"Isn't that the effect of clear thinking? I like to get to the bottom of a problem, and I see myself as I am,

wouldn't you say? That's why I asked your opinion, there's so much light in an outside point of view."

"Oh, I don't value your mind, not at all! It does very well, but it would never overwhelm me. I suppose you know you haven't a sense of humor, either. But you are a dominating personality. You're in excellent health."

"I certainly am."

"That's a large part of the charm. When I met you first, before I had the chance to feed you up, you were less magnetic."

"I'm charming, am I, because I'm well fed?"

"The reason why I'm fascinating—if I am. Would you say I am? . . . Wait till you see a thin woman. But you may adore her."

She didn't sound worried, and he felt no compulsion to apologize further. She was sitting in a posture which he supposed accidental; it brought out the contours of her body, and the beautiful sanity of her skin—slightly brown from the sun, yet he imagined he could see the red blood only a little beneath. Her head was royal in its pose, always, yet her face was eager; the look in it when she talked held his eyes away from some other exquisite charms.

"You're not a perfect lover, after all—but I like you just as much. You don't say the things a woman craves to hear, but in your own dumb way, dear man, you're very satisfactory."

He objected to being called dumb.

"I can't say what I feel about your beauty, Lilith—I haven't the words. But you make a difference in the things I look at now, and in the sounds I hear. I'm

more awake than I was. That's love, isn't it? When I've held you close, sometimes, and have been thinking of nothing but you, the scents of the trees, the ground and the flowers have come in through the branches of our house. There are some perfumes now that bring you to me—when I walk through the woods, at once my lips are on yours, and your heart beats against mine. You say I ought to enjoy the present, and not ask so many questions about life, but when I look at you, or have you in my thoughts, I feel you are beyond me, much older and much younger, ever so much wiser. I'd like to know more, so you won't leave me. I'd like the children, if they'd hold you. I know well enough, you are too beautiful to be just for me."

Her lips grew to his—he felt her body fainting in his arms, as in the moonlight that momentous night. There was in her passion a note of desperateness.

"When should I leave you? Never—not till the end of the world! You will leave me, but when you grow weary of her, you'll think of our happiness, and when you come back, I shall understand. It isn't in you to be an ideal lover—but you are mine!"

IV

Adam was at the pool, alone. He had chosen a morning when Lilith, he knew, was going to the meadow; his swimming needed improvement, and he hoped he could practise better unwatched. She was more than humanly graceful in the water, as smooth and pliable as though she came of that element. He had told her so, in various phrases, and it would have gratified him if she had replied in kind, but silence or the truth were her alternatives. Adam didn't feel at home in water, and he wished he could get around without splashing so much. Perhaps concentrated practise would do it.

He tried it first with long, slow strokes, sidewise, with his head in the water. That was her method. She must have some means of breathing not known to him—he choked. Perhaps if he held his breath—but sooner or later he had to breathe, and he couldn't get his head raised without churning up the pool. He crawled out on the bank, and sat studying the water for the secret. If he weren't so afraid of it, the water would hold him up better. That's all she would tell him, when he had asked her, and now it seemed meager instruction. He let himself down again, feet first, determined to be less afraid.

She had a trick of moving fast, yet with the most leisurely waving of arms and legs. He would be leisurely. He wasn't so beautiful, and his body would never be so alluring, not even when submerged, but he had excellent arms and legs, he was persuaded, and properly waved, they would do him justice. . . . Yes, by terrific effort

of the will, he did hold himself down to leisurely gestures, but he didn't move ahead; it wasn't swimming, it was floating, mildly active but stationary. To reach shore he splashed.

He pulled himself out, and stood in the sun to dry. She hadn't asked him to swim better—she hadn't made a comment till he, expecting praise, had demanded her frank opinion. In such matters she wouldn't flatter, but she was contented with him as he was. Yet if she, a woman, could do it so awfully well—he dropped into the pool and began again.

After this failure, he dried himself a second time. She had the most affectionate manner, yet a kind of awe was growing in him, as he found out, week after week, how much she knew, and how clear life seemed with her. This nature she was always talking about, this hidden wisdom which had made the world, and him, and her—why was she on so much better terms with it than he? Had she learned about it by hard work? She was too cheerful—it must have come easy. She was a wonderful woman. Her body, for example. While he was afraid of her, at first, he had noticed it in some detail, without excessive admiration. Then, after that moonlight night, it had been the means of ecstasy, to embrace rather than look at. Now it was becoming a mysterious sort of language. She said things with it. At least, when he saw her, she made him think of unexpected and lovely patterns, and emotions, and longings, and regrets. And not only when he saw her. In her absence, as at this minute, she was before his eyes, and those stirrings were in his heart.

He wished he could keep up with her. Swim as she did. Train the animals as she could. Take life as simply.

He expected to be late for lunch, but when he reached the house she wasn't there. He felt very lonely, all the more because the place spoke of her, her touch was on every part of it. He was conscious of the tidy hut, orderly and inevitable—yet she spent no time on keeping it so. For the life of him, he couldn't produce a meal out of the things he could see there, but when she returned she would disappear for a second and bring out several courses, each better than the last. Her bed—he could see her sleeping on it. She was beautiful even when she slept. She could afford to sleep in public. He had watched over her, in worship of her loveliness, which seemed more absolute when she lay there, breathing lightly, eyes closed.

His meditations were interrupted by the cat, which came creeping tentatively around the corner of the house. She stared at him—her expression betrayed nothing of what was in her mind. No doubt Lilith, if she had this opportunity, would train the animal. He made several sounds with half-closed lips, hoping to suggest encouragement. The cat continued to stare.

"Come here! Come over here and lie down!"

She could have no good reason for her indifference. He was tempted to take a stick to her, but that would be unwise, because later when he wished her to retrieve a thrown stick, she would be frightened, expecting a beating. He must use patience and persuasion. But as he drew near, with kindly hands, the cat moved off. Not hurriedly, or as if there were need to fear him, but as though it happened to occur to her to move. He followed, and when he thought she was within reach, tried to pounce on her. She avoided him by skipping sidewise, with her back slightly arched and her tail conspicuously erect.

"Confound you! Come here and be friends."

Perhaps this wasn't Lilith's method, but the cat was irritating. He looked behind the house for a stick, not of dead wood. When he came back the cat was gone, and Lilith was running up the path toward him. He dropped the stick, and hoped she hadn't noticed it.

"I was right—I was right! Come on down to the meadow. Quick!"

"Of course you're right," said Adam. "What's it about?"

"The cow! It's back to normal, as I said it would be, and there's the most wonderful creature beside it—you never saw such a thing."

He needed no urging. As they hurried down together he tried to collect his wits in the presence of this wonder. The miracle Lilith had suspected was as nothing to the vision which suddenly opened before him. She had been thinking of a purely physical achievement, of which no animal body was capable. Obviously it wasn't. But if the cow had been the means of creating another creature, entirely different, why might not every living thing cause an original universe to begin—an independent addition to the known world? Could one predict what even the humblest forms of life might produce? And if each novelty in turn produced other novelties, and the world were forever completing itself——

He began to see why life hadn't been comprehensible. It wasn't the fault of his brain—simply, life wasn't all there yet. Perhaps some of the factors essential to solution wouldn't be produced for a long time. A geometrically creative world!

"The implications are prodigious!" he said.

"Well," said Lilith, "you can read into it as much as you like. Anything nature does is prodigious enough. What are you going to read in—motherhood, the precariousness of infancy, or the aptitude of all animals to feed?"

"The presence of a creative force! Aren't you excited?"

He stepped on a sharp stone, and had to hop several yards on one foot.

"If we can get there unmaimed," said Lilith, "I think you'll enjoy the spectacle of a cow with her calf, without philosophical inquiry. That cow knows how to live. I'd like to exchange ideas with her, if there were a language. I've been looking into her eyes, and thinking how much I've yet to learn."

"What's this calf like?"

"Like all others, I suppose."

"There's every reason to think not," said Adam. "In a truly creative world like this, the product would vary—no two alike. It's easy to see why. The slightest change in conditions might affect the result. To a large extent it would depend on the cow's state of mind."

"What are you talking about, Adam?"

"It's like the way ideas come to us—they are modified by the occasion. That's why they are all different. Now, anything capable of offspring——"

"One of us is mad," said Lilith. "If I weren't in a hurry, I'd find out which. Don't hurt yourself on that splinter—I noticed it when I crawled through, on my way up."

They got through the gate, and came to the new family, in the corner of the field.

"Where is it?" said Adam.

"The calf? Have you lost your eyesight?"

"You don't mean this short thing with the long legs?"

"Of course."

Well, if she had so much pleasure from it, he oughtn't to dampen her enthusiasm. He looked the cow over.

"Do you see much change in her eyes? She always had that blank look."

"Blank? Profound, man! They're wonderful eyes. . . . But isn't the calf adorable?"

"Unless you press me, I shan't say it is. But I suppose when it grows up, it will develop into almost anything. That's the advantage of being so indefinite. What sort of animal do you expect it to be?"

"A cow."

"Not just another?"

"Why not?"

He seized her shoulders and clung to her, pleading.

"Not another cow, Lilith—please not! After such a miracle, just one more of the same thing! I thought you said life was interesting. Think how awful, to live a long time and watch the repetitions!"

"It's not my doing—why do you say please to me?"

She knelt down and patted the calf's head. The shaky little creature liked her.

"We'll watch it grow, Adam—they grow very fast. Before you realize the time, this child will be as large as her mother."

Adam turned away, sick at heart. It wasn't simply that life had lost its last chance for variety, but if there could be no novel contributions to the universe, then he'd have to solve his problems on the basis of what was already created, and that was insufficient. The sight of

the calf was a setback to the intellectual life. He had hoped for more light; now there would be more milk. . . . Cows—more cows. Dogs—more dogs. Endless monotony! Eternal insignificance!

He waited at the fence till Lilith was ready to come home.

"I'm sorry you were disappointed, dear. When I called you, I thought it would thrill you as it did me. You looked for something still more wonderful? I'm easily pleased, I guess, but you're an idealist, darling, you have noble expectations. I admire you for it. It's too bad you get such awful jolts."

"The disappointment is of no consequence," said Adam. "Perhaps it's my mistake. But I don't like to feel that my erroneous expectation was more admirable than the outcome."

"No, that will be bad for your character, I can see that. If you make the comparison, you'll grow conceited. The choice is between observing what you'd like, and observing what really is. If you have a dream, I suppose it's stupid to check it up. If it agreed with the facts, it wouldn't be a vision."

Adam declined to have his disappointment translated into a moral problem.

"If the cow had produced a new kind of creature, I could see the value of it, but I regret the waste in this duplication. It isn't even a better cow. I can see no excuse for it."

Lilith put her arm over his shoulder as they walked along. He knew she was sincerely eager to comfort him, and he would have expressed gratitude if he hadn't feared to weaken his case.

"There are several excuses for it," she said. "In the first place, I don't know what the cow was like when she was young. Now we'll have a demonstration. That's useful, isn't it? It's nature's way of forcing us to imagine the past and the future. If they weren't much like the present, we'd go badly wrong."

"That idea suggests other questions," said Adam. "I don't know what you were like when you were young. You mean, if we had a daughter, I'd see your history repeated in her?"

"Perhaps—only perhaps. She might take after you."

"Well, what if the calf——"

"Oh, the fathers of calves aren't so influential. Don't miss the main point, just to trip me up—the animals live shorter lives than we do——"

"How do you know that?"

"Well, if you don't, you're the only one who doesn't. They grow old fast; a dog dies of extreme age before a child has really begun to live. That's very fortunate for us, because we can watch them and get an idea of our own longer generations. Take the cow, now. I feel great sympathy for her, which she probably doesn't need, because she is worn out and rather at the end of her days. I shan't like to reach the end myself. And the calf is so helpless for the moment—that's the way we begin, and some of us continue, dear man. Perhaps nature didn't mean the animals to be reflections of us, but if we're wise we'll use them so. And it would be impossible if they didn't repeat."

"If I grasp the idea," said Adam, "you're not really interested in the cow at all. You use the cow to be sorry for yourself."

"Now you begin to understand! Of course. Only, I'm not sorry for myself, I'm merely interested in life, which happens to be tragic."

"It's not always intelligible," said Adam, "but why call it tragic? If your theory of birth is correct, an animal like the cow ought to consider life, not sad, but surprising. According to you, nature puts a mating impulse in her, and after she has looked up her companion, she is content. Then one fine day, along comes the calf. That's not tragic—it's ridiculous."

"It's very much the way men and women must take their experience, however. Until we have lived, we don't know the consequences of anything—and by the time we have learned, it's too late. That's tragic. You're afraid life won't be forever new. I wish it would repeat itself more than it's likely to. The first time around, it's beautiful, except for what I failed to understand; when it returned, it could be perfect."

When Adam walked with Lilith, their steps led them invariably back to the house, and they always stopped there, though the day might be young and there were other places to visit. Now they rested on their bit of lawn, without realizing where habit had brought them.

"For the cow not to know her destiny—the ignorance you say is ridiculous, I think majestic. Dear man, can't you imagine this vast world at its constant business of bringing things into life? Putting out blades of grass, trees, bushes, vegetables, cows, horses, dogs, cats, men and women? Nature produces them all, whether or not we intend she shall. So large a purpose, so relentlessly pursued, is majesty itself. I suppose that's why we feel uplifted when we begin to understand it. No, we don't

get so far—I mean, when we begin to observe it. That kind of wisdom I'd like to have—I want to be sure I observe it at least. You discuss the reasons, but—you'll forgive me, won't you?—you don't always see what's before your eyes."

Adam pulled at the grass roots for a moment, looking for a telling reply.

"The difference between man and the animals concerns me more than it does you, Lilith. You seem reconciled to a strong resemblance with cows and dogs and what not; the very idea to me is offensive."

"I'm willing to say we are animals and something more, but, Adam dear, there are a number of animal sides to my being which I'd hate to give up. Don't look worried—you enjoy your meals yourself, don't you?"

"In that sense, yes," said Adam. "But no animal can direct his life as men and women can. From the human elevation the low groping method of the beasts seems too casual, or as I called it, ridiculous. But we ought to carve our own fate."

"I'm a little disappointed in you. If you had said, we'd like to carve our own fate, I'd agree, though the remark is superfluous, but surely you don't expect to foresee your career, or direct it yourself? Given the circumstances, you can act in harmony with your character, but that's all the independence you'll ever find."

"Preposterous, my dear Lilith!"

"Preposterous nothing, my dear Adam! Did you foresee you would fall in love with me?"

"What does that prove?"

"You mean, you didn't foresee it. Are you certain you won't fall in love with another woman to-morrow?"

"Quite certain."

"That means, you will. And do you know when your first child will be born? Or whether you'll have a child? Or when you will grow old, and when you'll die? If you don't know, do you feel ridiculous?"

Adam studied a moment before he risked an answer.

"I've a notion I shall die too soon, no matter how long I live. I shan't get all done that I've started. So I don't want to lose an hour. We're here to do things."

"I'm familiar with the feelings," she said. "Yet perhaps we are here for nature to do things with. That's not a disreputable suggestion, unless you believe nature is disreputable. The cow who obeys the immense force for which she may not even have a name, of which her slow brain may hold not a suspicion, might be, after all, a model for the wise. The calf down there, or a child, if children are as trusting and simple as calves, may be an example of blessedness."

"You don't want to give up your intelligence, in order to be blessed, do you? That would be silly."

"If it's the only way to blessedness," said Lilith, "I'd call it tragic. But I'd have the satisfaction of using my intelligence in reaching that conclusion."

She lay on her back, looking up at blue sky, and sunny clouds floating over her hill.

"If there are other worlds up there, what sort of people do you hope live on them?"

"Wiser than we are." It struck him as a good reply.

"Nonsense," she said. "I hope there's a woman up there, no handsomer than I am, and a man no cleverer than you, trying to deduce the secret of the universe from a cow and a calf."

V

"While you're getting breakfast," said Adam, "I'll run down and see how the calf is this morning. It won't take a moment."

"Dear man, the calf will be there when we have eaten —then I'll go too."

But Adam was already on his way.

"I just want to see how fast it's growing."

Lilith went about her work, humming a tune. He certainly had lost his wits over the calf! But she encouraged the new enthusiasm, because it took his mind off his irrelevant philosophies, and fixed his attention on nature. She counted on the calf to educate him.

When she had laid out the fruit on the flat rock, and tidied up the little house, she sat on the grass and waited, content and cheerful. He would probably be late, but perhaps he was getting more out of life than if he were on time. Perhaps the people who always appear when they say they will, can learn nothing from experience; something ought to turn out more worth lingering over than they expected.

She stretched at full length, her elbows on the ground, and watched a beetle exploring through the jungle of grass blades.

Adam ran along the path to the spring, and crawled through the gate. He couldn't enjoy breakfast till he was sure that wabbly creature had survived the night. The least mishap would be fatal to it. In the dark the

horse might step on it, or even the cow—or the dog, failing to recognize any resemblance to its mother, might chase and kill it. He had spoken of the dangers to Lilith, and had suggested precautions, but she relied rather blindly on the good luck which had enabled the cow also to grow up. If nature couldn't look after the calf, she said, it wouldn't do the calf any good for Adam to tuck it into bed every night.

The calf had survived, sure enough. It was standing by its mother, still weak in the legs, but obviously alive. The cow was lying down, and Adam guessed a catastrophe—she wasn't resting, like a dog, nor chewing her cud; she was flat on her side, breathing hard. Her eyes were not so large as he remembered—there was a mist in them. The calf nosed at its mother wistfully, perplexed. Having just been born, it was called upon to distinguish between good and bad fortune.

The beetle was still crossing the lawn when Lilith heard him racing up the hill.

"Come right down—the cow's desperately ill! I told you she was! It's worse than just a calf!"

He didn't need to call twice. She was running by his side, asking questions.

"I'm afraid it's just the calf—sometimes that's enough."

"Enough for what?"

"I'm afraid the cow's dying."

When they reached the meadow, he knew she was right. The cow was much feebler than when he had left her, and her breathing more difficult. They and the calf stood watching, awestruck.

"What can we do for her, Lilith?"

He expected her to know everything, so far as animals were concerned, but she only shook her head.

"She doesn't have to die, does she? Can't we make her well?"

"If we knew what is wrong with her, we'd probably know she is already dead, for all practical purposes. The harm is done."

"Who did it?"

Lilith had her eyes on the cow, and was not disposed to talk. Adam had not seen her sad before.

"She was safe enough, unless some one hurt her in the night. It's a disease, I say. Don't tell me her appearance was natural!"

"It was no disease, and nobody harmed her. She was probably too old. Having a calf is dangerous even when the cow is young."

"If it's as bad as that," said Adam, "there's something wrong with this nature you're always talking about. If you have to lose a cow each time you get a calf, why not keep what you have and be satisfied? What would nature say to that?"

"You'll have to ask nature," said Lilith. "Of course the cow doesn't always die. I'm not sure nature worries about it, one way or the other."

"If the cow dies, who takes care of the calf?"

"You may, if you're interested. If you don't, I'll have to. Otherwise the calf will follow its mother."

"I never heard such a cold-blooded conversation!" said a voice behind them. "Neither of you has a heart! Can you look at a creature so helpless, and not take it at once under your protection?"

They saw a woman, less tall than Lilith and much

more slender, with dark hair and dark blue eyes. Lilith took her arrival with composure, but Adam was startled. Her voice was sweet enough—she spoke as though she liked to speak correctly; but it was a good voice to tell people their faults. Adam was conscious of a new note. He examined her with care. In a way, she was as beautiful as Lilith, but without the slightest resemblance, except that they both were women. Her skin was white, too, but it didn't suggest health, nor living in the air, nor swimming in the pool. No such gorgeous shoulders and bosom as Lilith's; a delicate person, rather. Well, delicacy has its charms. He wondered what the expression of her face was when she was happy. Just now she was quite upset.

Lilith said nothing, and he felt it prudent not to be the first.

"Who owns this cow? Is it yours?"

She spoke to Lilith, who turned to Adam, with somewhat more than half a smile.

"It must be yours, dear—you were here before I was."

"Is this your cow?" said the woman. "I'm not surprised you're ashamed to admit it! This cow is the victim of neglect."

He looked at Lilith, to see if she felt as guilty as he did, but she didn't. She was more cheerful than at any moment since he had told her the cow was dying.

"You live here, do you?"

Again Lilith referred the question to Adam. He cleared his throat boldly.

"I live on the hill there—half-way up. Lilith has a

house on the top. For the last few months I've been living with her."

He had said too much. The woman looked merely serious, up to that last sentence; then she froze him into silence.

"I can understand," she said, "why this poor beast has been neglected."

His normal love of argument returned.

"Why has she been neglected?"

"You needn't be impertinent," said the woman. "You know very well. Are you going to do anything for her now?"

He glanced inquiringly at Lilith, but got no help. She was pleased about something; he realized her smile was out of place, in the presence of the dying cow.

"We suspect," he said, "that whatever is wrong with the cow has happened already, so there's nothing to do."

"Help me lift her head, then—I'll make her comfortable, if no one else will."

She sat down by the cow's head, and with his aid got the animal's nose pulled up into her lap, where she could pat it.

"Are you sure you're making her comfortable?" said Lilith. "I don't believe you could have known her in good health. She would have resented violent handling."

"Your question," said the woman, "does you as little credit as your——"

The cow gave a groan, and ceased breathing.

"That," said Lilith, "is death."

The woman disengaged herself from under the cow's head, and got to her feet.

"She's still alive, I think," said Adam. "See how her sides go up and down!"

The woman turned toward Lilith, as he did, for expert judgment, but she only shook her head again. Adam wondered what to do next. They couldn't remain indefinitely, looking down at the body.

"What sort of barn," said the woman, "has this cow been kept in?"

"By me, do you mean?" said Adam. "No barn. I never saw a barn in my life."

"You live in a house, yet you permit your animals to catch cold at the most critical moment of their career?"

It did seem bad—the cow ought to have had a bed of evergreens, such as Lilith and he slept on. But where would you stop? How about the dog and its companion, the cat and, if she had one, her companion, and the two horses and the bull? His mind ran on lightly to other questions.

"Have you a companion?"

"What is that?" said the woman.

"Do you live with anybody?"

Her face grew suddenly red, and her eyes looked most unpleasant.

"Did you bring your man here to insult me?"

"No," said Lilith, "I didn't even bring him here to meet you. We didn't know you were coming. We were here because the cow was dying, and we were sorry to lose an old friend."

"Even then, you needn't insult me. I'm as sorry for the cow as you are, and she's less on my conscience."

Lilith's only repartee was to raise her eyebrows slightly, but the effect on the woman was marked. She

had a trick of pressing her lips till they were a bit thin. She pressed them now.

"My apologies for intruding! I interrupted you and this—man."

Lilith said nothing, but knelt beside the calf, and put her arm around it. The creature looked into her face. The other woman stepped in front of the dead cow and leaned down for a parting inspection. A trickle of blood was flowing from the animal's mouth. The woman gave a feeble shriek and collapsed on the grass. Adam rushed to her side, but Lilith continued to hug the calf.

"Lilith, she's dying!"

"Is she?"

"You *are* hard-hearted! Just look at her!"

"She's very good-looking," said Lilith, "and in her present exposed posture she's at her best. She's very much alive, only rather quiet. That's what you call fainting."

Adam leaned his ear close to the woman's mouth.

"She's still breathing!"

"Of course she is. I can see it from here."

He laid his head close to the woman's body.

"I can feel her heart beat!"

"There's very little more you can do for her," said Lilith. "How are we going to get this calf up to our house?"

"You won't leave this poor woman here, unconscious, with the dead cow?"

"Well, we have to leave the cow, temporarily," said Lilith, "and the woman has a tender feeling for it. If she wishes to sleep for a while, you oughtn't to sit around and watch her. She would say it's not nice."

"I'll get some water from the spring," said Adam.

"She can't drink it now—wait till she wakes up."

"I'll sprinkle it in her face."

Lilith began to laugh.

"I don't want you to strangle her."

The sprinkling had no immediate effect.

"I'll rub her hands," said Adam.

"Why not her feet?"

"Why feet?"

"Why hands? Why rub at all? She'll come to when she's ready—there, she's beginning. I could do this myself, Adam, if it interested me."

The woman began to stir feebly, a few motions of her head and her hands, a few sounds, half word, half groan. Adam was on the ground by her side, and when at last she opened her eyes, he raised her energetically to a sitting posture. Since she was still too weak to keep her balance, he supported her with his arm.

"I'm sorry to be such a nuisance," she said. "I just got here this morning, and the first thing I did was to take a walk from the orchard along the road, and when I came to the gate I saw you two, and I thought I might have found friends, so I ventured in, and then the cow died, and, and . . . and . . ."

She began to cry.

"That is what you call hysterics," said Lilith. "This woman can do everything. . . . It was you she saw at the gate, Adam. She has picked you out."

The woman stopped her tears, instantaneously.

"I'll leave as soon as I have the strength. Hussy!"

"That," said Adam, "is a new word. It means, I suppose——"

"We'd be glad to have you rest at our house," said Lilith. "There's plenty of room, and you can stay as long as you like. You're not very strong, that's clear, and this has been a tiring day. There's an easy path up, and Adam will be glad to help you."

"I'll go to my own house," said the woman. "Thanks ever so much! When I get my strength back, I shan't need an escort. I prefer to care for myself."

Adam felt they had lacked courtesy, somehow. When the woman began her trembling progress toward the fence, he watched every step. As he expected, she fell, just before she reached the bars. He picked her up and carried her quite easily to the side of the cow Lilith was seated on, still comforting the calf. The woman didn't weigh much, he observed, and she was peculiarly soft. Delicate was the word.

"Where do you live?" said Lilith.

"In the orchard. That is, I haven't been here long, but I feel at home in the orchard."

"Quite a distance," said Lilith. "You'd better change your mind and stay with us."

"Impossible," said the woman. "I'm late already."

She started once more toward the gate, not much steadier.

"Before she reaches the orchard," said Adam, "that woman will faint again, several times. Oughtn't I to see her home?"

Lilith was never more loving than now, when she laughed at him.

"In the circumstances, dear man, you can't escape seeing her home. Go gracefully. You take her, I'll take the calf."

"I'll be back in a few minutes."
"Good-by."

On the road the woman recovered rapidly. She still leaned heavily on his arm, but he noticed more vigor in her step. Indeed, she walked faster than Lilith, and the further they went, the more amiable became the expression of her face. Just as they passed the spot where the first rabbit had lived, something Adam said, of no importance, caused her to look up and smile. A very pleasant, encouraging smile. Dimly it reminded him of that moonlight evening by the pasture fence. . . .

As they approached the orchard, he wondered in what part she had built her house. His ignorance, of course, was the penalty of not walking that way once in a while, to see what was going on. It was ages since he had visited the orchard.

"How did you learn to build a house?"

"What do you mean? A house isn't built."

"The kind I'm talking of is—the kind that Lilith and I have. It's all of soft boughs, and there's a splendid bed. Before I knew better, I used to sleep on the ground."

"That's what I expected to do to-night," said the woman. "Of course I'd rather not, but what else can I do?"

"I'll build one for you. It won't take long, and I've plenty of time."

"What a wonderful man you are! You make me feel humble—I know nothing at all."

"Oh, I don't know much—just the few things a man picks up by experience."

"Exactly," said the woman, "but what a man picks up by experience is the important thing to know."

She looked at him again, with that encouraging smile, and her body pressed against his. He stooped down and kissed her.

She drew off a step, and slapped his face.

"You can't do that sort of thing with me!"

He was so mortified, he wished he could exchange places with the cow.

"I didn't mean——"

"Don't mean—and don't do it. It's vulgar. I'm not an animal!"

There! He wasn't an animal, either! He had always said so to Lilith. This woman had the right idea, though it broke out unexpectedly.

"You wouldn't kiss any one, ever?"

"My husband. That is, if I had one. No other man."

"Say where you want your house, and I'll try to build it for you. Perhaps with time you'll forgive my error. I meant no harm."

She smiled again, most encouragingly.

"I'm sure you didn't."

"I didn't catch your name," he said.

"Oh—you may call me Eve."

PART FOUR

EVE

EVE

I

"This end of the orchard is unfamiliar," said Adam. "I never came so far."

"It's the best end," said Eve. "It's secluded, and there's a view—don't you love it? And a small river runs down there."

"Deep enough to swim in?"

"I dare say—I don't swim."

"Lilith swims like a fish."

"She would."

They came to a rocky place with an outlook.

"This is where the house should go," said Eve. "The front can face toward the river, and then we'll have a more retired wing on the orchard side."

"Further down the ground is softer and it will be easier to stick in the boughs."

"This is the place," said Eve.

"Where are the evergreen trees?"

"Won't appleboughs do? Well, you'll probably find whatever you need in that grove by the river. While you're gone I'll get the place ready."

Adam began his task in a serious mood. This woman expected a good deal. It would be wise to get her settled as soon as possible, and then go home. Lilith would be waiting for him, with the lunch spread out on that pleasant rock.

There were no evergreens in the grove by the river. Half a mile beyond it he found some, and blistered his hands tearing off the boughs. The big ones wouldn't come at all; he had forgotten how Lilith managed. These small branches wouldn't go far, yet they'd be an awful load to carry, and he'd have to make several trips. He was quite exhausted when he reached the orchard. Eve was wearing her thinnest mouth.

"What on earth have you been doing? I said that grove by the river."

Adam sat down to rest.

"Aren't you going to build the house? We'll never be through if you don't start!"

She looked so tired and discouraged, he couldn't explain to her then.

"Don't you worry, the house will be built. I'm just thinking how to lay it out."

"I told you—the front toward the river, the rest toward the orchard."

He got up and tried to stick in a branch, but there was solid rock under the surface. A dozen yards to the left there was soft ground.

"From this place," he said, "the view is even better."

"The view is satisfactory here, but I suspect you don't know how to build a house on this lovely stone."

"No, I don't."

"Then build where you can. There's no use complaining, and I can have it changed later. . . . Come on, don't lose any more time. Here, stick these in."

"These pieces are too good to waste on the foundation—we'll save them for trimming. Hand me one of those long branches."

His command offended her. She walked toward the pile of large branches, but lifted none of them. Rather than delay, he got it himself.

When the outline of the hut began to define itself, her interest grew keener, and she stood beside him as he worked. No question but she was charming. Perhaps the spell lay in the combination of strong will and complete ignorance. Her positiveness gave her character an edge which he hadn't felt in Lilith, and she was as helpless in the world as the calf. He wondered what would have happened to her if she hadn't met him. The sense that she depended on his skill was impressive. To think of that exquisite form lying unsheltered on the hard ground!

This job would take all day. He'd have to explain to Lilith why he missed lunch. Eve would no doubt prepare a less superb meal.

"Isn't it time we ate?" he said.

"Splendid! I'm famished."

"Well, tell me when it's ready. I'll work till the last minute."

Eve looked just a bit resentful.

"How can I get it ready when there's no food?"

Nothing could be more reasonable. She wasn't acquainted with the region yet. He dropped his work and found some fruit for her on the other side of the river. When he returned she was trying pathetically to complete the house, weaving the branches but missing the pattern.

"Here's what will make you feel better!"

Eve looked at the fruit critically.

"Don't you think there ought to be more variety?"

He was puzzled.

"You mean quantity? That's all I could find."

"No—there should be more than one kind of food. Is this the way you've been eating? Hasn't anybody died yet besides the cow?"

Remembering pleasant meals with Lilith, he felt hurt.

"The cow," he said, "ate grass, with no variety at all. The horse still does. What would you advise in the case of the horse?"

"You, not the horse. For myself, it makes little difference what I eat—almost nothing is enough when I'm busy. But a strong man like you—well, I can see you need intelligent oversight."

She ate rather sparingly, examining the fruit for bad spots. Adam examined himself, confronted with this new flaw in his habits. No question but she was a superior woman; these refinements spoke for themselves. How free and easy he and Lilith had been! . . . This reflection did not entirely cancel the satisfaction he had in a large ripe peach, which he finished in silence—except when he sucked the pit and licked his fingers.

"Eating," said Eve, "should be an art. Of course we eat to satisfy hunger, but that fact should be hidden by our manners. We should seem not to be greedy, like the animals, but rather engaged in exchange of hospitalities."

Adam picked out the best remaining peach, and offered it to her. Since she declined, he began gnawing on it with studied indifference.

"Rightly understood," said Eve, "a meal is an opportunity for conversation."

"Conversation?"

"But you mustn't talk with your mouth full."

He swallowed hard.

"Then you can't eat and talk!"

"Alternately. You should exchange ideas, and while the other person is contributing an idea, you can eat a little."

It sounded simple, but he didn't know which was to begin. There was another peach, if she would only contribute an idea.

"If my house is to be finished, we'd better get to work!"

Just before sunset he put the last touches on the frail shelter. It wasn't so firmly set up as Lilith's, but it would probably serve unless there was a high wind. He made a special trip across the river for branches shorter and softer, and on the way back gathered more fruit.

"What are those branches for?"

"I'll show you in half a minute."

It turned out so well, he was rather proud, and expected her approval.

"What is that?"

"Your bed."

Apparently the idea embarrassed her.

"There's nothing wrong with it, is there? It's softer than the one Lilith and I have, though not so broad. But there's room enough."

He lay down on it, to show the adequacy of its area, and jounced up and down, to prove it strong. Eve left him at these gymnastics, and walked out with her head high and her mouth thin. He would have liked to know what was amiss, but the day was gone, and Lilith would be setting out their supper on the flat rock.

"I brought you a little more fruit, along with the bed."

She thanked him in a tone which he construed as unfavorable to any more fruit.

"Well, if that's all I can do for you, I'll be going."

She was studying the house, tilting her head over one shoulder, then over the other. Delicate shoulders, but lovely, and a shapely sensitive head. In profile, he observed, her body had a moderation of line, the charm of understatement. He rather enjoyed looking at her . . . Her face suddenly became animated.

"I have it! I know what's the matter with the house. It should face the other way—like this."

It took her three seconds to pull down what it had cost three hours to build. She indicated a new plan on the ground.

"That's how it should be."

"I'm glad," said Adam, "you left the branches over most of the bed, for that's about all I can set up again before dark. I'll come back in the morning and rebuild the other parts."

Eve looked at him, startled.

"I couldn't stay here alone. I'd be afraid."

"The first night," said Adam, "but afterward you'll be accustomed to it. You'll probably hear the dog baying —that's the most fearful noise, but it means nothing. If you sleep on the ground, all sorts of things like to crawl over you, of course, and I saw one snake, but I've built the bed pretty high. If anything really happened to you, I should be surprised."

She smiled, and her lips were most agreeable—the thinness had disappeared.

"Nothing will happen to me, because you will protect me."

"Protect you?"

"You will stay here. I want you to!"

In the innocence of his heart, he wondered if he had made the bed wide enough. He also wondered how, if she objected to kisses, she could be so bold in claiming a companion. She may have guessed his thoughts; she certainly followed his glance.

"I'll sleep here, and you'll take those branches and make another bed under that bush down there. You'll be able to hear if I call."

The moment had come when he wanted to go back to Lilith, to the woman who never gave a command, and who liked him to be free. When he went home now, having deserted her a whole day, she would know why and where and all about it—she would be glad to see him, and she wouldn't blame him. She could build her own house, too, and nothing was jollier than one of their fruit meals. He had only to say good night to Eve, and walk off.

But he couldn't do it. The words wouldn't come. Besides, she didn't expect him to reply. She retired to what had been the doorway of her house, and turned for parting instructions.

"I'll wake you. I'm usually up quite early. Good night."

Adam took a few boughs down to the bush, and laid them together. Before settling himself for slumber, he tried to sort out his thoughts. He hadn't intended to stay, yet he hadn't entirely intended to go. From the beginning, life had been more and more interesting. First

there were the animals, with the really limited opportunity they had offered him for social development. Then Lilith had arrived, with her splendid, generous spirit. Now this woman. It showed how unwise it is to form hasty conclusions. He had considered himself the climax of creation; then, somewhat against his will, he had recognized the further activity of nature in the creation of Lilith, but he had supposed she was the closing episode. Obviously there was more to come, a constantly richer experience. More women, it seemed—and no two women were to be alike. What life required of you, he now understood, was a receptive attitude, with a certain flexibility.

This woman made a new kind of appeal. Perhaps it was the emphasis she put on manners. What she said about eating was much to the point. Of course one didn't go to dinner in order to eat—not unless one was an animal. The object was to talk, in between eating. Lilith and he had had some of their finest discussions over their food. The woman was right about manners.

But then, she herself was not polite. She didn't say thank you, not after all the labor he put on the house. She pulled it down without first asking his opinion. She told him to take his bed and go lie down, as though he were a dog. Well, he had done what she wanted. Perhaps her lack of manners was part of the spell. It made him wish to see what was coming next. For example, he wondered how she'd behave when just awakened. Lilith at that critical moment was always radiant, but he himself was not cheerful for several hours.

This woman had a faculty for getting things done. If any one had told him yesterday that in the next twenty-

four hours he would wait on a strange female as though he were her servant, build a house for her, get her meals, sleep outside the door to assure the tranquillity of her mind—he would have jeered at the prophet. She had a passion for accomplishment. Wasn't that what he had been searching after? Hadn't he told Lilith, time and again, he was in this world to act, not simply to contemplate and understand? Eve was, in a sense, more fit to be his companion; perhaps she had arrived now because in his development he had reached the stage where he needed her kind of inspiration. If she really believed, with him, that human effort properly directed will eventually improve the world, then their meeting was not accidental.

Moreover, she needed him. Without his help, she couldn't have built a house, nor found a thing to eat, nor passed the night in peace. When he contrasted his first night with the luxury of hers, he could measure the contribution he was making toward human happiness. Lilith was in need of nothing, and near her, though he loved her, he couldn't be sure his existence justified itself. It's pleasant to be useful.

The one disagreeable part of it, was what she did to his face when he tried to kiss her. Lilith never disliked that instinctive salute. Yet he remembered the panic which came on him when he invented the first kiss, and immediately expected Lilith to resent the liberty he had taken with her. She didn't resent it, but why had he expected her to? Wasn't it because she ought to have resented it, like this woman? His instinct was correct. However pleasant these personal contacts might be, some hidden wisdom warned against them. Very well; he

didn't care whether he kissed this woman or not. If he wished to kiss somebody, there would be Lilith, always. Meanwhile, the way Eve had protested, argued some higher form of companionship, without gestures. The notion appealed to one's more spiritual side.

He spread the boughs carefully, and lay down. He watched stars for a while, and noted the pattern of a few light clouds. He was very tired. Nothing but excitement had kept him going all day, and now, when there was opportunity for rest, the woman had asked him to watch. He must keep awake for a little while, anyway. If the dog should bark, or if the horse should wander up in the darkness, how could she defend herself?

Before he decided how she could, he fell asleep. He dreamed he was sleeping under a bush, watching over a beautiful woman named Eve, who was a recent creation and absolutely helpless. He was building houses for her as she slept, and whenever one side was complete, she would wake up and destroy what he had done. Then she would go to sleep again, without saying thank you.

Then he was leaning over her, and she was smiling up at him. It was moonlight, and there was a dead cow on the other side of the fence. He leaned down to kiss her, but she fainted, and he had to fetch water from the spring and dash it over her.

Then all at once she was herself again, walking very fast down the road and telling him what beautiful manners he had. The way she looked up melted his heart—she was so complimentary, so tender, so encouraging. It was odd that such attentions from so beautiful a woman should make him want to cry. She said the progress of nature was remarkable; if he cried well now, he would

cry better later on, and best of all the third time. While she conveyed this idea, he was eating a large ripe peach.

Then, to his annoyance, the little snake he had once killed, rose up out of the ground at the woman's feet. He wondered why he had let her build a house on the very spot where the snake was buried. The snake looked at him reproachfully, and he wanted to tell Eve it wasn't his fault, but the snake dropped the subject and offered the woman a strange kind of fruit which Adam couldn't name. He wanted to say it was useless, she wouldn't eat fruit unless there was a variety, but not a sound would come to his lips. He tried harder—he tried to shout—but the snake only smiled at him. The smile was familiar —kind and gracious. It wasn't a snake at all, it was Lilith, welcoming him home.

II

It was Eve, waking him up.

"You wanted to finish the house early, I believe. I couldn't sleep another night in such a disordered place."

"That's too bad," said Adam. "What is there for breakfast?"

"Nothing. There was some fruit left, but I threw it away. I don't think it's good for you."

"Well, I'll give you one more chance. I'll go across the river and get some fruit, and you'll leave it alone! Don't you worry about my health! For one thing, I like fruit. Besides, I don't know where to find anything else."

"If you lose your temper," said Eve, "it's a sign you know you're wrong. Nothing would please me more than to let you eat what you like—and nothing could be easier for me; but you can't thrive on fruit exclusively. Aren't there any vegetables?"

"Lilith has some—I'll get you a basketful as soon as I go back. This afternoon, at the latest."

"Perhaps we can get on with the fruit for a while—and I'm sure there are other kinds of food near by."

"You might look for them," said Adam, "while I'm swimming the river."

But when he returned with more peaches, Eve had found nothing. Instead, she had tried to move the couch into another position, and had broken it down completely.

"What happened to the bed?" said Adam.

"It came apart—you must have built it hastily. Never mind—when we turn the house around, we'll find a better place for it."

Adam couldn't explain to himself why he stayed a minute longer. He knew he was treated badly, and he wanted to see Lilith and report his strange adventure. This woman had no right to appropriate his services. Yet she managed to shed about him an illusion of compulsion, against which it was hard to struggle. In some secret fashion, she indicated that he was to blame for not building the house and locating the bed as she wished, and he found himself accepting the verdict and resolving to retrieve his reputation as a useful man. Why? The question is still unanswered.

He got the house turned round, and the couch adjusted, by the middle of the afternoon. While he was working Eve talked little, and he had nothing to say, but he felt approval in her manner, and was glad to feel it. It was the satisfaction of one who has done wrong and been forgiven.

"That's about it, I think," he said, as he put a twig in the roof, for an ultimate flourish.

"Yes, that's it. The right way's the easiest in the end, isn't it?"

"Now, where do you want the bed?" said he.

"I don't care—it's not important."

"But you were moving it around this morning. If you'll say just where it's to go, I'll put it there."

"We can leave the bed till later. It won't be dark for hours yet, and you must be tired."

"Well, you see, I ought to be getting back. Lilith won't know where I am."

"You think she won't? Of course, if you wish to go now, don't stay a minute. I dare say I'll manage somehow."

"This morning you weren't managing at all. I'll fix the bed and any other furniture you want, and be getting along."

"Wasn't there some fruit left? Let's eat it and talk a little. You've been so occupied, you've hardly said a word to me."

Her manner was suddenly sociable and leisurely. As she lay on the grass and nibbled a peach, he couldn't imagine she had ever concerned herself with getting the work of the world done. She was relaxed and care free, and her fine features were unexpectedly soft. If she would only stay that way, she would be a lovable woman —almost as attractive as Lilith herself, perhaps.

There was a difference between Lilith and her, however, a difference of character which showed in their appearance. Lilith was almost as young as Eve, yet she looked as though she knew more and had lived, not longer, but more thoroughly. The lines of her body were full and luscious, and the browns and pinks of her skin were lively colors, strongly marked. Eve was a slender, neutral sort of figure, by comparison; exquisite in surface, you might say, but also monotonous. Adam wondered if the strength or weakness of emotions, especially in women, affects the outer conformations. Perhaps Eve took her experience chiefly in the realm of nerves, or maybe she was the intellectual type. . . . That would be odd, since she got on so badly with life, and Lilith so well.

"How do you spend your time?" said Eve.

"Living," said Adam.

"That's not specific, of course."

"I hadn't thought of it before. The days go fast, and there's always something to do."

"What, for instance?"

Adam had an intuition that not all of his harmless life with Lilith should be reported. He made a few mental expurgations.

"Well, we get up rather early——"

"I asked how you spend your time."

Her tone stung him.

"I spend it with Lilith, if you want to know—as much as I can, day and night."

She saw her error.

"Of course—I understand perfectly. You were saying you and she got up rather early——"

"She gets breakfast, herself."

"And you the other meals?"

"Of course not! She does it far better than I can. She's a highly competent woman."

Eve smiled.

"That kind usually are."

Adam disliked the implication, and he had no wish to argue with her about a woman she really didn't know well. He got up and dusted himself off.

"Where's that bed of yours to go? I'll fix it for you, and be moving along."

He expected her to ask him to stay, but she didn't. She was disappointingly cheerful about his going. He was disgusted with himself for caring whether she was or not. She got up too, and moved toward the house.

"I can never thank you enough for what you've done."

"Ah, belated appreciation!" said Adam to himself.

"I realize how stupid I must seem after a clever woman like Lilith. You were very good to spare me the time."

She waited for him to say something pleasant in return, but he couldn't think of anything.

"If I should ever need you again, might I call on you? Something might get out of order in the house, and I've no one else to send for."

"You'll get the trick of fixing it yourself—that's what every one else does. But of course, in a desperate case, call on me."

"It's a very generous offer," said Eve. "I know you don't like to be away from Lilith, but if I get into any trouble, I'm afraid it will be desperate. I'm not clever with my hands, and I've no experience at all."

It was quite true—he could see that. She knew nothing, really. She couldn't get a meal, she couldn't build a house, and she didn't know how to behave with men. That crowning ignorance proved her innocence. Lilith never looked at him as Eve was now doing, unless she was getting him ready to kiss her, yet Eve disliked to be kissed.

"There, it's firm enough, and if you are satisfied to have it in that corner, there's nothing more for me to do. . . . What's the matter?"

Eve was holding a finger with the other hand, and sucking it. Her face was wrinkled, suggesting great agony.

"Something in my finger—stings!"

"Let me see."

She drew quite close to him, so that he could see. He

thought it would have been simpler to hold out her hand, but she wanted apparently to keep her lips near the injured hand—all of her came along with it. He made a mental note to tell Lilith what a fool the woman was.

"It's a splinter all right. Now if you'll sit there quietly and suck it till I can find a strong thorn, I'll lift it out."

She looked pathetic, he thought, with her finger in her mouth—rather attractive, too. Lilith would have to tell her not to behave so—well, so blindly. When he sat down beside her, she leaned upon him, a delicious if accidental pressure. She was so deeply interested to watch him take out the splinter, she forgot herself.

"There we are, good as new! Those things are nothing at all."

"Not when I have you to take them out for me!"

She was quite irresistible—or he didn't try to resist. He seized both elbows, to save his face from slapping, and he kissed her furiously. She made no objection. She only looked sorrowful, and waited patient as a martyr till he should get through. When he let her go, he had nothing to say—no word of affection, no compliment or avowal. With the final kiss, a bleak idea dawned on him, that their relations were now essentially altered, and it would be harder to get away. She was offended, he could see that.

"I thought you might like it, once you knew what it was. Sorry if you think I was rude. After all, it's natural."

Eve grew sadder still.

"That's the objection to it. Nature! What is nature but a poor excuse for nasty behavior?"

He was too angry to tell her, philosophically.

"Now see here, you wait till you've had more experience before you try to judge others! Don't you want to be kissed? All right, have it your own way—but don't behave as though you did!"

"I didn't! I wouldn't do such a thing!"

She was mortified to tears—he could see the drops under her beautiful eyes. The drops improved them, he noticed.

"You wouldn't intentionally, but you don't know enough about nature to avoid the appearance of it. When a woman comes too near a man, or makes him look at her, or leans up against him the way you did——"

"I'd rather not know about such things," said Eve. "They come soon enough. I'll learn about them when I'm married."

He wondered whom she would marry, but decided to make no further reference to her ignorance. She didn't even know how few men there were.

"I always promised myself to be kissed by no one except my husband. See how you've robbed me!"

He couldn't see, but the mention of her husband disturbed him. There were no other men, but the important thing was that she hoped there might be. Evidently he didn't satisfy her ideals.

"Your husband," he said, "won't notice the difference."

"But I shall. I shall recognize true love, and always be ashamed to have been subjected to anything less worthy."

"You've no right to take it like that—your husband will do the same thing if you play the same trick on him."

"Trick?"

"Yes, trick—get a splinter in your hand, and insist on being coddled—lean up against him—gaze into his eyes——"

"Adam, you are positively insulting! You can't come here and talk to me so! Unless you apologize at once, I can't permit you to stay in my house!"

"Then I'll go. I've said nothing that wasn't true."

"True, poor man? You've revealed the sort of life you've been leading—the kind of company you keep. What do you know about women—of the better sort?"

"Lilith——" he began.

"We'll leave Lilith out of it. She's your friend, and I don't care to criticize her. Besides, a man oughtn't to blame a woman for his faults."

"I wasn't going to blame her! She's the finest——"

"We'll leave her out of it, if you please."

He knew he was innocent, but a feeling of something like guilt was creeping over him. Just where his error lay, he couldn't see, but he ought to apologize for something. Pretty stupid of him, not to be able to talk to a woman without making her angry. Or perhaps he shouldn't have kissed her. It wasn't pleasant, anyway—she didn't like it.

Eve was moving around inside her house, pretending to be busy. There was nothing to occupy her, not a thing there but the house and the bed, and both were fastened down, yet she was much occupied. He walked over to see what it was all about. She had her back to him, and paid no attention.

"Well, I'll be off now."

"Good-by."

She didn't turn around. He couldn't leave her in such a mood.

"I say, Eve, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"I don't suppose you meant to."

"I'm sorry about it. When I came here, I intended only to be helpful."

"Well, we have different ideas as to what's helpful."

"I wish you'd forgive me, so I could go home more cheerful!"

She sat down on the bed, and began to rock back and forth. She held both hands up to one eye.

"Is it another splinter?" said Adam.

"Good-by. Go home to Lilith. I'll do nicely by myself."

"What's the matter with your eye?"

"I shan't tell you. You'd say I was luring you on to your worst behavior—what's the word?—playing a trick on you."

"Don't be foolish—let's see it!"

She turned her head sidewise, and blinked a distant red eye at him.

"I can't see so far—let me look."

"It's at your own risk then. I don't get things in my eye just to fascinate you."

"If I could bring up some water from the river, I could wash it out."

Eve rose enthusiastically.

"I'll go down with you."

He washed it out, but the pain remained, and she had to hold one hand at least over the eye. Her patience was very sweet. He swam the river and got some fruit for her, and though she didn't really want it, she ate a

little to show her appreciation. She spoke softly, as though suffering had subdued her to a wide sympathy with the human race. He found it necessary to wait on her a good deal. When he took hold of her, for example, to steady her footsteps, he was careful to preserve a respectful attitude, and seeing his reform, she trusted herself to him completely.

"If I leave you," he said, "you'll be rather helpless with that bad eye."

"What if I am? I can't impose upon you. You know your affairs better than I—go whenever you must."

He felt pretty cheap, to leave her there, holding her head.

"What will you eat to-morrow?"

"Fruit, as usual, I suppose. There doesn't seem to be anything else."

"I'll bring you some of our vegetables. Lilith knows where to get plenty."

Eve put on dignity, even with her red eye.

"You're very kind, but I don't know Lilith well, and I'd prefer not to accept charity."

"Well, fruit then, but how will you get at it? You can't cross the river."

"How long," said Eve, "would it take me to learn to swim?"

She said it so innocently, Adam failed at first to get all the implications.

"No time at all—I learned in two or three days," he said.

"So quickly? But you're a man, clever at that sort of thing."

"I'd guarantee to teach you in three days—make it four, to be safe."

"If you will, then I can take care of myself."

Adam turned to go.

"I'll come the first thing in the morning, for your lesson."

She looked completely bewildered.

"But you aren't going to-night, are you? How am I to get on without you? . . . Adam, I thought you were sorry for what you did, and we were friends again."

He didn't follow her argument, but he realized he was to stay another night. He walked down to his rough couch, and straightened out the uncomfortable boughs. Eve watched till he lay at full length. In order not to raise her voice, she came half-way to him.

"I'm so relieved. I was afraid you were going to-night."

III

"Of course, you swallow the water," said Adam. "You keep your mouth open and let your head go under, and then you draw a long breath. I wonder you survive. Now, listen for the last time—unless you pay better attention, these lessons come to an end; when your mouth is under the water, don't breathe in."

Eve tried again. She stood a few yards from the bank, put the palms of her hands together in a prayerful attitude, leaned slowly forward on the water, and after several frantic gestures, went to the bottom. She struggled up choking and discouraged.

"It's not a bit better—you'll have to let me show you. You sink so fast, you haven't a chance to practise the stroke. Now then!"

He had got down into the water, and seized her around the waist. Obviously he wanted her to extend herself along the surface, with some artificial support from him. She hesitated, then inclined forward, and then, as he took firm hold of her, she stood up again, and pushed him away.

"That's not nice. You shouldn't put your hands on me."

"Why not? How else can I hold you?"

"Don't hold me."

He climbed out on the bank and turned a disgusted look at her—at her dripping body, her red eyes, her wet hair plastered over her face. She began to shiver.

"Come out—I give up. I can't teach you. You'll have to stay always on this side the river. When I'm down this way, I'll gather some fruit for you, and Lilith will help with vegetables. If that isn't satisfactory, you'll have to solve your own problems."

She was wringing the water out of her hair, and making up her mind whether to cry. He recognized the symptoms, and walked away.

"You're not angry, are you? I was doing my best—in a little while I'm sure I could swim."

Adam continued toward her house.

"Fine!" he called back. "Go ahead and swim."

"But I never can without you, Adam! Do help me some more!"

Of course she couldn't do a thing without him—he was a cad to leave her.

"I'll give you another lesson if you let me give it my own way. No telling me what I do isn't nice!"

"It was the—you took hold of me so——"

"Good-by. I don't know any nicer way to hold up a drowning woman."

She couldn't believe she really was to lose him, but he walked so far and so fast that she ran after, and surrendered.

"I never meant to hurt your feelings—you've done everything for me—Adam dear!"

"No hard feeling, but also, no reason for staying. Your house is built. Nothing remains but to teach you to swim without holding you up. Perhaps there's a way. I'll ask Lilith, the first moment I reach home."

"I wish to be taught now, dear Adam—hold me up any way you want to."

"I didn't want to—it just seemed necessary. You've got the wrong idea entirely. You speak as though I needed to be educated, as though my natural impulses were all wrong."

"Not all," said Eve. "Some of them are kind and admirable, but you must admit, you're too well disposed to whatever is natural—it's not surprising that your manners, now and then, are crude. To lay your hands on a woman, for example——"

"I won't any more," he said. "I didn't enjoy it. I was thinking only of lifting you to where you could swim."

"Couldn't you be a little more fastidious?"

"Very much so. That's why I'm going home."

Every suggestion of tearfulness vanished from her. She clenched her fists and stood very straight.

"Of course you're going! I wonder I've wasted so much time over you, when I had a free choice! Leaving because you've grown fastidious! What you've got to learn about life will take several centuries! You're nothing but a savage—except that you can talk, no better than an animal! If you've behaved with any decency while you've been with me, it's because from the first moment I disciplined you. What you were after was kissing, and that sort of thing. That's my earliest impression of you! And now you offer to teach me swimming, and the art consists of——"

"You're wrong about the swimming," said Adam. "Good-by. When any one is to be kissed, I'll go to Lilith, who understands. As to the swimming, my innocent purpose was merely to facilitate your reaching your meals. I might, of course, carry you over, so that you'd

always be near the fruit, but in that case the new house would be on the wrong side."

Eve was suddenly calmed and interested.

"Why not change it, Adam? Let's build another house over there. Now you've done it once, it won't take you so long."

Adam considered all the possibilities.

"Very well—another house over there, and I'll carry you across. Then you can stay on that side, and Lilith and I will keep this."

Something about the offer dissatisfied Eve.

"Adam, don't be silly—forgive me—come back to the river and teach me to swim."

"It will take less time to build the house."

"But I have a house, Adam—a lovely one—the one you built for me! Don't you know I couldn't abandon it so lightly? Teach me to swim!"

He really had intended to leave her, that time.

When he was standing in the water, one arm under her chest, the other hand directing a leg to kick more effectively, Eve suddenly wriggled to her feet, and pointed toward the bank.

"What's that?"

"Where? Oh, the dog."

The dog was standing very quiet, with his head up and his gaze fixed on them.

"How terrible!" said Eve. "I felt his eyes go right through me. Will he come after us?"

She was huddled close to Adam, in abject fear. He was happy to reassure her.

"Perfectly harmless—he doesn't like to be beaten with a stick, so whenever you're afraid of him, seize a stick

and shake it. It's best to call him Towser. Here, Towser!"

He didn't mean to call the dog in—he was merely showing off—but Towser entered the water with an energetic splash, and came right at them. Eve wound herself around Adam and screamed. Towser barked and splashed more furiously. Adam tried to wade ashore with Eve about his neck, but he lost his balance and they both went under. He swallowed no more than his share of the river, but by the time he had pulled her to land, she had fainted.

Very carefully he laid her on the grass. It was a matter for congratulation, he reflected, that she had fainted once before—he now knew what to do for her. Just what did he do before? Oh, yes—sprinkle water over her. Well, that might be considered done. Then rub her hands—Lilith had suggested feet. He tried the hands, and kept on rubbing till she opened her eyes, with a few preliminary groans.

"Dear Adam! . . . I—I almost left you."

She was so pitiful, he tried to cheer her up.

"Oh, no, you were here all the time. Nothing the matter with you!"

She sat up. He was amazed at her sudden strength.

"Help me back to the house."

He carried her, and she made no protest. Since she wasn't at all heavy, he did very well. When he put her down on her bed, she rewarded him with a sweet smile.

"What a great strong man you are!"

He thought so himself, but said nothing.

"I'm awfully sorry, Adam—you've been so generous, and I know you wish to go home—but you see how it

is. I can't do a thing for myself—not for some time," said Lilith.

"You're perfectly well—just a little too much water in the lungs. You'll be fine as a fiddle in ten minutes."

She gave him another sweet smile, this time tempered with patience and forgiveness.

"I doubt if a man ever knows. I've really had a narrow escape."

Adam wondered from what, but he decided not to ask. Evidently he was expected to know many things he hadn't heard of. He would ask Lilith.

"Adam—my hands are cold. Would you mind rubbing them?"

He rubbed them, off and on, till after sunset, playing nurse to her, and following her sickroom instructions. He didn't enjoy it at all. To be so near her brought him under a kind of spell he didn't like. Lilith was the one he loved, but this woman, when she was near enough, could put impulses in him which ought to have gone hand in hand only with a true and deep passion. He was humiliated to discover that if he wasn't on his guard he might covet an embrace from a woman he didn't care for.

"You won't sleep so far away from me to-night, will you? If I had a sudden chill, I never could reach you down there under the bushes."

"Didn't you ask me to sleep there? I thought you considered it not respectable any closer. It was your own idea—I shouldn't have thought of it."

"Any one ought to understand—between such old friends as you and I. How about the floor here? It's not soft, but it's convenient."

He doubted if he had heard correctly, but that was what she said. She expected him to lie down there, like Towser. . . . He brought up the branches from under the bush, and lay down. With a woman of this kind, the only thing to do was what she suggested.

Eve's condition improved, toward night. In fact, he could see nothing wrong with her. But she became unusually talkative.

"You're always doing things, aren't you? I never saw a person so active. Here I've wanted to ask you questions—you know so much—but we've had no conversation at all."

"What do you want to ask me?" said Adam.

"Oh, you can't start a good conversation like that—in cold blood."

"How do you start one?"

She laughed to herself, as though the humor of his ignorance were delicious.

"I'll tell you a thing or two without being asked. You shouldn't laugh at a man that way, unless you want to make him angry. If he's angry, he'll leave you."

"But you're not angry!"

"Perhaps I am. . . . I'll tell you something else. Until you understand the effect a woman has on a man, you'd better live chiefly by yourself. I know you're not trying to lure me on, but if you were, you wouldn't have to change your habits."

He spoke so vigorously, he expected her to defend herself, and he had several good replies ready. But she lay silent a moment.

"Adam dear, I wish I weren't so ignorant!"

"Well—learn by experience, the way the rest of us do."

"But how does one learn by experience? How do you begin?"

He was on familiar ground now.

"You can't talk about experience—it has to be lived. It's life."

She meditated. He wondered if she had gone to sleep, and raised himself to see.

"Yes," she said at last. "After a number of years, I suppose—Adam, do you think the position of woman will ever be improved?"

"What's the matter with it?"

It was her turn to raise herself up and look at him.

"You've been here longer than I, and you ask such a question?"

"Lilith never complained, and you've been cared for pretty well, haven't you?"

"But why should I be cared for?"

The question had occurred to him, but he waited for what she might say about it.

"A woman doesn't want to be a dependent; she has as much pride as a man. Of course you've cared for me—but when a woman has to be cared for, it hurts her self-respect. You know I'm grateful—yet you're an intelligent man. You understand without my saying so, that everything you've done for me, has been a sort of humiliation."

"Has it? I never guessed."

"You won't admit it, of course. But how can a better world be hoped for, if nature is always going to handicap us?"

"Will you say that again?"

"I mean the handicaps a woman is born to."

Adam pretended to be thinking it out, but he had given it up from the first.

"This is too deep for me. Women are all right, I should have said. Lilith knows much more than I do, and she's happier, on the whole. She understands the world, I should say. You know, once she——"

Eve got out of bed.

"Isn't it rather oppressive in here? Let's sit outside."

For an invalid, she was spry. He sat on the grass, a yard or so off, and she moved over till he could have whispered in her ear.

"The bitter fact is, woman is only a toy for man to play with. Man can do things, but when he wishes to relax, he looks up some woman and makes love to her. No man takes us seriously—that's the shame of our position. They pretend to be friends, do us a kindness or two, and then they leave us."

"Do they?" said Adam. "How many times has this happened to you?"

"Never, as yet—but I can see it coming. You men are quite transparent, Adam dear."

"Well, before it comes, as you say, what would be your idea of the cure? Am I to keep on doing more kindnesses for you, and never leave? Is that what's wrong with the world? If it is, there's something to be said on the other side. I wanted to kiss you, but you slapped my face. If we had been the sort who make good companions, you would have kissed me back, as Lilith did. It's all right—I'm not complaining—but so long as we're not naturally suited to each other, it would be a mistake for me to stay. Perhaps some man will come along later who will like to build houses for you,

and teach you to swim, who can rub your hands when you faint, yet never want to take you in his arms. I mustn't stand in his light."

"If I had let you kiss me, you would have proceeded to other liberties."

"Certainly," said Adam. "The kissing ought to come first."

"Wouldn't that have been wrong?"

"Perhaps. In the only case I know, it was delicious."

She waited a second or two. It struck him that she was learning to discuss these matters with less resentment than she had shown at the beginning of their acquaintance. Perhaps nature, that power Lilith worshiped, was putting some sense into her head.

"What surprises me," she said, "is that such a kind-hearted person should have so little sentiment. You really don't indicate any sympathy for the finer side of life. Your remarks are clever but hard. Don't you like to show your feelings? Or have you none?"

"I'm bewildered," said Adam. "We were talking, as I supposed, about the deplorable state of women in the world, and suddenly the question is whether I have feelings or sentiment. Just what do you mean, and how did we get around to it?"

"Oh, it's the same subject still!"

"Which?"

Eve considered her next remark rather carefully.

"If you had sentiment, you would take another attitude toward women. As it is, you expect us to be what you call companions—your servants, I judge, certainly ministers to your pleasure. But if you remembered that we are the mothers of your children, that we make your

homes, that we are the occasion of your most romantic vision, especially in your youth——"

"You're going too fast. Certainly I'd have a good deal of sentiment for the mother of my children, but there isn't any mother and I haven't any children. Don't expect me to be sentimental in advance. As for making a home, Lilith built her own house, and I built yours. Some day I may build one for myself."

"That's not what I mean," said Eve. "You're so materialistic! Home-making is more than house-building. There's a quality, a touch, which only woman can add. . . . And, of course, there ought to be children."

"I think I'd like children myself," said Adam. "Some one to carry on the name."

"You'll probably have them, then, and your wife will pass the rest of her life nursing them when they're sick——"

"Oh, are they sick?"

"Most of the time. You don't realize yet what a fate women are born to."

"No. I'm just beginning to understand what men are born to. See here, don't you want the children?"

"It isn't a question what a woman wants—that's the masculine point of view. In life a woman has duties."

"If I were a child," said Adam, "I'd hate to be a duty to any one."

The discussion was losing its interest. He wondered whether it would be all right for him to drop off to sleep.

"Adam!"

He roused himself.

"Well?"

"I'm sorry I slapped your face."

"So'm I."

"You shouldn't have done it, but you didn't know any better, and it was wrong of me to lose my temper."

"Oh, that's all right. It didn't really make any difference."

He began to doze off again.

"Didn't you want to kiss me?"

He came to and recovered the line of thought.

"I thought I did. Perhaps I was mistaken."

"You're rather sleepy, aren't you?"

He was asleep.

IV

Eve got on better with her swimming, the second lesson, but she wouldn't admit the improvement. It was essential to her happiness, somehow, to believe this art was not for her.

"Some people have the gift," she would say, as though the possessors of the gift had much to explain.

At lunch-time Adam gave up trying to convince her. He was hungry, and, besides, it wasn't worth arguing about. Let her say what she chose, so long as she didn't sink. At least she had been reasonable this time—no protests about the indelicacy of his manners. No doubt she'd learn gradually. Meanwhile—some day she'd find out how fascinating she could be, in that purely physical sense which she despised. Nature had thrown away on her cold temperament some effective charms.

As they sat on the grass at their unsufficing meal, he had that vividness of impression which precedes moments of expected parting. He looked her over, he attended to her words, resolved on this last day to miss nothing. She was growing more beautiful, no doubt of that—or else he was accustomed now to her type. Her lips shouldn't be called thin—they were merely sensitive. The large, full sort of woman was ungentle in comparison; this slender kind, he must admit, cast an exquisite spell.

Well, thank goodness she didn't bewitch him! She might have done so, easily, if her temperament had con-

tained any basis for companionship. The man who lived with her permanently would be sure to hear about all his faults, sooner or later.

She stopped eating before he did; he was conscious of her eyes on him when he wasn't looking at her.

"You know so much more than I do."

"Not at all," he said.

"That's why I'm surprised you're so buried in the senses. You have a soul, of course."

"Quite so," said Adam. He was on his dignity.

"My idea of it is, we're put in this world to decide whether we'll live in the soul or in the senses. How does that seem to you?"

"Not clear as yet. Go on."

"It's perfectly clear, Adam. You eat more than I do, you're always looking for food, you pick out the softest place to sit down, you insisted on building that luxurious bed for me, when I should have been as well off on the ground. That's what I call living in the senses."

"And no food, no bed, no soft place to rest on, would be living in the soul? I had a good deal of that the first few days I was here. You'd better not try it."

"Adam, you can be stupid at times! The soul is that part of us which tells what is good and what is bad. It's the judge inside of us. A comfortable bed may or may not be desirable—that depends. There's nothing wrong about food, but it isn't everything."

He was getting interested in definitions.

"I see. When I find a piece of fruit, and think it better than I ever had before, or when I sit down on a

soft spot, it's my soul that tells me the fruit is good, the ground soft. All right. I can see that."

"You don't see it at all. You're merely arranging your ideas so you can do as you please. Haven't you a sense of duty? That's the test. If you have a soul, you have a sense of duty."

"Before you came," he said, "I took myself seriously, but the more I see of your turn for duty, the less I think I've any real call that way. I don't miss it. My philosophy, if you want to know, is to get along without harming anybody, and without missing anything. That's about all you can hope for. Life's a tragedy, of course. Very interesting, but still tragic. That's why we laugh."

"How absurd!"

He would have resented the tone and the phrase, but he couldn't remember whether we laugh at tragedy or only smile. It didn't make much difference.

"If you had the right attitude toward soul," said Eve, "you'd know how to treat women. I sometimes think we're sent to find how much soul there is in a man. It varies. If he had a soul, he'd really love her, and if he loved her, she'd become for him a spiritual image. He'd worship her."

Adam declined to be drawn in at this point.

"In that case, kisses would be all right. I dare say they'd still belong to impulses in the senses, but they would express a spiritual attitude. When you kissed me by force, the day before yesterday, there was no spiritual attitude. I didn't feel any worship in it."

"No," said Adam, "I'm afraid there wasn't. I just wanted to kiss you, but you didn't enjoy it. You've a

right to your own kind of happiness. I shan't bother you again."

"Nonsense, Adam, we can't leave the question in that state. There's nothing wrong in kisses themselves —it's what they stand for—or don't stand for. Now if you loved me, I shouldn't object to kisses."

"You wouldn't object to them, eh? But would you like them? And how would you know I loved you, if I didn't kiss you?"

"You might tell me—or you wouldn't need to, I'd see it in your eyes. Dear Adam, I know you do care, or I couldn't have spoken so intimately. The moment we met, I saw you were interested."

"Did you? That's what it is to be sensitive. I didn't realize it myself."

"You wouldn't," she said. "But you've had glimpses of it from time to time, haven't you? I saw those moments too."

"If you want to know just how I've felt about it, I expected to stay only a few minutes, but I've been here several days. Most of the time I've thought you exacting and unreasonable, but in between you've been charming. What I don't approve of, is your habit of flirting without realizing what you're doing. I must condemn that."

"I'm sorry, Adam—I don't mean to flirt. I wish you didn't suspect me of low conduct. When I discover what it is you keep referring to, I'll stop it, but so far I'm mystified."

"You don't need to stop it if you are sincere. All any man would object to is inviting him and then slapping his face. Oh well, I didn't come to criticize you."

The least she could do, he thought, was to say he hadn't criticized her. But she changed the subject.

"The body, the senses and all that, are really a point of departure."

"Departure?" said Adam.

"We should rise from them, until we are living in a world of spirit."

"Is that the same as a world of reason? When I was younger, I was interested in reason, myself."

"Not the same, I believe—reason is nothing but logic, dealing with what you can see. I mean rather the world of feelings, intuitions, aspirations."

"Oh, that world," said Adam.

She was becoming an enthusiast.

"I'm always on the brink of it, and sometimes I think I'm crossing over. . . . You haven't had that experience yet, have you?"

"Never. This is the only world I know, and Lilith says I don't know it well. Can't we have intuitions and aspirations right here, on this plot of grass? Why must it sound so difficult?"

"It's a thing to feel, not to explain."

For some minutes they gazed at the landscape, toward the stream where he had tried to sustain her decorously till she could swim. He began to laugh.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing—I was laughing at something."

"So I supposed. At what? It isn't polite to have secrets that way."

"You wouldn't think me polite if I told you what I was laughing at. I'm sorry, Eve. I couldn't help it."

She rose and walked toward the house.

"Oh, don't be angry—come on back. I'm awfully sorry."

It was an error in strategy, and it decided his fate. He had intended to go, any minute, but now he had asked her to return and stay with him.

"I'll come back if you tell me what you were laughing at."

"All right. When I was holding you up by the ankle —you know—you looked so serious. It struck me as funny."

"I did my best," said Eve. "You may laugh at me if you like."

"Why, I wouldn't laugh at you for the world! You're getting on splendidly. In another month or so——"

He hesitated, not having intended to reveal his conservative estimate. She flushed a little red.

"Adam—I've wanted to speak of this before—since you have been—if we're to live so near each other, this way, hadn't we better be married?"

He was too astounded to reply.

"I know how you feel toward me, dear, and our unconventional relations are all right in my eyes, but——"

"What do you want me to do now?"

She bridled slightly.

"Nothing you don't wish to! But if we're to be partners here, why not openly?"

He saw no method of unraveling it except by asking questions, and he began at the bottom, with the least probable.

"You're not asking me to love you, of course?"

"Dear Adam—ought we to be living together if we don't love each other?"

"Well, that was my idea, but I never guessed you'd agree."

It wasn't his intention to stretch out his arms—in fact, he thought he didn't. She surrendered herself to them, anyway.

Late in the night he was sharing her soft couch. She had fallen into contented sleep, but he lay awake, gazing at passing stars through the cracks in the shelter, as once he had kept watch on his hard hill-shelf, while the moon traveled through the tree branches. His state of mind now was no happier than then. Just how had he got into this fix? And what sort of creature was this?

When first he met her, beside the dead cow, he had jumped to the hasty conclusion that life, having supplied him with miracles and surprises, was furnishing one more climax. Lilith had come first—and she was perfection. From his present knowledge he was sure of that. This woman, coming second, might have been as much above Lilith as Lilith was above the animals. In certain regards Eve did indicate advance. She was inclined toward spiritual things, and away from nature. He knew because she said so, and she didn't like kisses—merely submitted to them. Moreover—this was what kept him awake—when he had started to practise those other gestures he had invented with Lilith that moonlight night by the pasture bars, Eve had been horrified. Indeed, she surrendered only because, she said, it was a wife's duty; she conceded something to the brutality of the male. All of which went to show that she was a superior person.

Yet there were two dark consequences of her superiority. She wasn't entirely pleasant to get on with. She

had expressed satisfaction in very little he had done for her, in very little life had brought her. To be sure, his house and his swimming lessons weren't much, and the meals he had improvised couldn't compare with Lilith's, but when she remained aloof, resigned, passive, even in his arms—that was a personal slight, somehow. It made her inexplicable. He had thought she really wanted to take him away from Lilith, to attract without seeming to, until he should be her devoted companion. But when he had responded impulsively, she had rejected him, and even now that they were married, she left him wondering just why she wanted him, just what happiness she looked for.

Happiness, as a matter of fact, was alien to her. He could admire her, but he couldn't imagine her enjoying any experience with Lilith's full and frank openness of heart. For Eve, life was spoiled by this preoccupation with duty. At intervals, when she smiled, her face was radiant, and you guessed what she would have been had she followed her natural gift for cheerfulness, but the glimpse was only for a moment—she recovered herself at once, and put the lines back on her face. Perhaps she thought it her duty to have a sense of duty. Any one could foresee what she'd be like later on. The important question was what would happen to him if he lived with her too long.

He tried to equip himself with an imaginary sense of duty, to see how it would feel. Instead of enjoying his daily swim, his ride on the horse, his delicious meals, his health, his companionship with Lilith, his sound sleep at night, ought he to have approached the river as something it was his duty to get into, or the horse to get up on?

Was it wrong to wake with energy in every part of him, delighting to be active? Absurd! Duty took the bloom off, and it wasn't necessary. You'd come out at the same point anyway, but if a sense of duty brought you there, you couldn't enjoy your virtues. If Lilith, adorable woman, had to be accepted as an obligation, would he want her? With the same drab, grim resignation, perhaps, as Eve had just betrayed for him. And yet——

What if Eve were indeed a superior being, who had the secret of another kind of happiness, hidden as yet from him? Hadn't he himself recoiled at first from the animal areas of experience? Lilith had taught him to be charitable, but what if his progress in charity had really been a loss in discrimination? He rejected the suspicion here implied, that he could be wiser or nobler than Lilith; beyond question she was an extraordinary being. But what if he, coming first, were as she had once suggested, above the animals but a little lower than herself? What if she, coming next, were an improvement on him but only a prelude to Eve? What if this slender woman who thought so often of her soul and was always on the brink of another world—what if she had brought with her an understanding of the universe which indeed had nothing to do with caresses, and which broke into felicity not expressed in smiles? He didn't like it—he preferred Lilith and nature. But what if that choice demonstrated his lowness?

He raised himself on his elbow and watched her sleeping. So he had studied Lilith—how long ago it was! And how different the two! Yet in this posture not so different, after all. Didn't that raise a further question? Eve was slighter, more frail, but she wore the same in-

nocence. Did all women appear innocent when they slept? Her lips were relaxed and soft, very lovable. What beautiful hands! Lilith's too had that pliable look when her arms drooped across the bed. Well, Lilith was more of a piece, more consistent, than Eve. She made you think she was born to be loved, and she really was. If Eve brought into the world the technique of a new experience, developing the soul and ignoring the body, then why was such a body wasted on her? She'd never look like what she wanted to be. She would always be misinterpreted—and she wouldn't let the blunder get away unrebuked. In the vague distance he foresaw a once peaceful world inspired by misunderstood woman.

He leaned too hard on his elbow, and the bed creaked. Eve turned on her side, then on her back, and opened her eyes. At once he pretended to be asleep. He didn't wish to engage in uplifting conversation just then. She looked over at him, and even touched him with a light finger, but he couldn't be roused. When she was quite still again, he opened his eyes ever so slightly. She was gazing up at the stars, he concluded. . . . It wasn't difficult to guess her thoughts, and the more he considered them, the more pity he felt. No doubt she came seeking a companion, as he had sought. Loneliness was a terrible thing. But with her tastes, she could find nothing among the animals—she couldn't tame a dog, nor milk a cow, nor ride a horse—obviously not. Nor could Lilith satisfy all the strenuous appeals of her spirit. He could imagine how Lilith would smile away Eve's seriousness. No, she had turned instinctively to him, the one available man, and from any point of view he had failed her. He hadn't uttered a remark which could be called spiritual, he hadn't

announced a single lofty sentiment—in fact, he hadn't felt any. Perhaps she was wondering now, in the lonely watch of the night, how long it would be before his soul awoke. She was resolving not to let her fineness be worn away against his blunt nature. She was planning, perhaps, to rescue him—he could tell to-morrow, at breakfast, in her first words. . . . And it was a bit mortifying that having himself had the idea of building up the world, improving things, accomplishing something, he had more or less forgotten about it, till this woman took it up. She wouldn't abandon the vision—something prevented her from leisurely attitudes. It must be her soul.

He cleared his throat, and she turned toward him.

"Oh, you're awake? I've been looking at the stars. Do you know the stars?"

"Well, not exactly know them. I've looked at them, from time to time."

"You don't know them? I hope you know the flowers?"

"I've looked at them too."

"Don't they mean anything to you?"

"Not a thing—no more than wind and rain. I like wind and rain."

"You know, this is rather terrible," said Eve. "Stars and flowers mean nothing to you. Then there can't be anything within you which corresponds, which craves them as a symbol."

"My, no! They're just stars and flowers. What more should I see in them?"

"They are the language of the soul! Don't you understand? Nature is here for us to talk with. Stars are our sublime syllables."

Adam resolved not to disappoint her entirely.

"Perhaps I do understand—partly. Flowers and stars meant almost nothing to me at first—I didn't even notice them, except as you'd have to see color and light. But when I fell in love with Lilith, I noticed them more—they were brighter, and I couldn't get away from them. They were in the air, as though I breathed them. The first night I had her in my arms, the stars went to my head. No—it was the moon that night. Other times it was the stars."

"Adam," said Eve, "I'm more than willing to overlook your past, if it isn't brought to my attention. You were not entirely to blame, because you knew no better. But now that I've warned you, I hope you'll practise some reticence."

He wasn't agile enough to follow her thought. Overlook his past? What was she talking about? Oh well, he could always pretend he was falling off to sleep.

"Adam—I'd like to know one thing—— Are the stars more vivid to you, now that you've married me?"

He was glad the question was so harmless.

"Oh no, not a bit. They would have been, I suppose, if I'd had you before Lilith, but she came first, and the stars can't keep on being more vivid with each woman."

She didn't reply, and he thought she might really be dozing. He raised himself to see. She looked at him, surprised and troubled.

"Blind!" she said.

"Who is?"

"You. Inwardly blind."

"Oh, inwardly, perhaps. I thought you meant I couldn't see."

"You can't."

"Don't be too difficult, Eve. It's no use to point out my faults unless you say it so I can follow. I answered your question about flowers and stars. At first, I admit, I wasn't particularly fond of either, except one blue thing in the grass, but afterward Lilith taught me."

Eve permitted herself to grunt.

"I'll teach you. You don't know a thing."

The worst was over. He yawned.

"That's right, Eve. I don't know a thing."

She was breathing regularly, and he listened to what he supposed were her slumbers.

"Adam, has she a garden?"

"Er—what? Oh no, no garden."

He remembered his prophetic dream—did it really refer to Lilith or to Eve?

"Poor man, you've never had a fair chance. To-morrow we'll make a garden, you and I, together."

Something told him it would be as they had built the house.

Together!

V

When she woke in the morning, she wasn't surprised to see him there, she didn't show the slightest emotion at the recollection of what had taken place the night before, she was, as far as he could judge, more completely adjusted to their new life than if they had been married for years. Or if she felt any emotion, this woman who talked of sentiment, she was too preoccupied to show it.

"I intended to have a garden, anyway, and our talk about flowers reminded me. We'll have it here, Adam, not in front of the house where it would spoil the view, but off to the left."

"That suits me," said Adam. "Let's have it off to the left. How does one begin to have a garden?"

"We'll dig up the sod from here to here," she said, indicating an ambitious area. "Then we'll break up the ground and take the stones out, and then we'll plant the flowers."

"And where do we get the flowers?"

"That proves how little you've observed. The flowers are everywhere."

"Then why do we need a garden?"

"You'll see when we get it finished," she said. "I know you'll like it."

He examined the sod for some time, without finding a convenient place to take hold of, to pull it up.

"When are you going to begin, Adam? I can't do a thing till you begin to dig."

"How shall I dig? Just look at that ground—tough grass, stones coming through——"

"That's the wrong frame of mind, Adam. If you've made up your mind, you can always find the right instrument. Try this stick."

He scratched the sod with the stick, and pulled it up with his fingers, and Eve followed him, lifting out the smaller stones.

"When we get this done, in a month or so," said Adam, "how do we know the flowers will grow here? Nothing grows here now. To me, that's an indication that it's a bad place for a garden. The slight experience I've already had, digging in this unpleasant soil, leads me to believe that gardens should be made in rich, stoneless earth, where the grass hasn't had time to get started. What do you think?"

She tugged at a rock much too heavy for her, and of course he went to her rescue. She accepted his aid without thanks, and directed him where to get rid of the rock.

"Not there—the flowers will grow farther than that —there, lift it on to that other one, and start a wall. There ought to be a wall on all sides."

"Why, for goodness' sake! Aren't we to look at the flowers?"

"We are, but they'll be our property. A medium wall will do."

Adam saved his breath for his violent labors.

"There, that's enough to try it out on. If any flowers will grow in that dust, I'll spoil some more sod."

She was willing to encourage him.

"Bring up some of the lilies near the river—the ones

I pointed out to you the other day. Roots and all, remember. Afterward, some water for them."

He threw down his stick and went to gather the lilies.

"You won't be late, will you?"

Hearing that question for the first time, he didn't know how momentous it was.

"Of course I shan't be late."

She hadn't told him how to collect lilies, roots and all, and it couldn't be done with the bare hands. He resorted to another stick, and pried the things loose.

He suspected the dirt ought to come with the roots, but he could think of no way to carry such a load. Nothing to do but tie several plants together, with long grass, and then, if he didn't shake them too much——

His eye fell on a familiar root, which on Lilith's table did service as a vegetable. A solid meal at last! Now, there was an idea—why not plant this in the garden, instead of flowers? Then Eve would have nothing to do but slip out and dig up a morsel or so, whenever she was hungry.

He laid the flowers down, and set to scratching the earth away from the new treasures. How grateful Eve would be! This time he really had done something constructive. Not even Lilith, clever though she was, had thought of raising them in a garden, right by the front door.

It took longer than he expected, but his zest was undiminished when he struggled home at last, a small bunch of plants on his shoulder, and a large mass of roots.

"There!" he said, flinging them at her feet. "That will feed you for a year."

She was standing at her doorway. If his head hadn't

been bent under the load, he would have read disapproval in every feature.

"So you decided to come home! I'd almost given you up."

"Given me up? Why, Eve! I've been digging away down there—you must have seen me—I came as soon as I got through——"

"Will you please hurry and wash up? You've delayed lunch enough without silly excuses. Yes, I saw you—you ought to have seen me. I waved and called. Have you no sense of time? I'll never catch up with my work."

Lunch, he remembered, consisted as yet of fruit, and preparing it came to nothing more than laying your hand on a peach and eating. But he preferred not to argue.

"Wasn't it flowers you went for? What are those things—weeds or trees?"

He sprang his great surprise.

"Those are the vegetables I spoke of—the food Lilith has. But she gathers it as she needs it—she hasn't a garden. I just happened to think how easy it would be to plant the roots in the spot I dug for you. Then you would always have food close at hand."

"My dear Adam, this is my flower garden. Vegetables would be out of place."

"Would they at lunch time? You said severe things about excessive fruit-eating."

"So this is what you wasted your morning on!"

"Oh no, I can eat them if you won't, and I did bring a few flowers for you. There they are, under the pile."

Eve rescued the lilies, and began sticking them in the ground. They were badly wilted.

"What are you crying about, Eve? Don't you like what I brought?"

From the house his old acquaintance the cat moved out with stately tread, and rubbed herself against Eve's leg. Eve leaned down again and patted her head.

"Oh, Adam, I'm tired, I suppose—that's all it is. I worked so hard to get this garden started, and I did hope you'd bring the flowers quickly, before they wilted."

"Next time I'll know better. Flowers, not vegetables. Syllables of our souls, not food."

"Flippancy," she said, "does not become you."

She had the cat in her arms now, and Adam could hear the creature purring.

"Is that animal all right? It doesn't sound so."

"That's the sound it makes when it is happy."

"Oh!"

In an awkward way he tried to restore himself to her good graces, but she wasn't to be cajoled. With time, of course, she became calm, he helped her plant the flowers and water them, she accepted his aid as usual, but a cloud had settled upon them. After an hour or so, he was enlightened. At the moment he was setting out his vegetables, a clear defiance right under her eyes.

"Adam, I wish you'd tell me why you were late."

"This noon? I did tell you—I found the roots and stopped to gather them. It can't be done quickly."

"Adam, it's a small thing in itself, but it has wide bearings. At best there's so much in married life to make us irritable, we must preserve all the little traditions of courtesy. For a housekeeper, there's nothing like punctuality. It's well to cultivate it from the beginning, don't you think?"

For a few seconds he continued his planting.

"My idea of companionship," he said, "is less explaining and more understanding. Don't I do anything right? Do you expect always to be correcting me? Why didn't you thank me for bringing you something to eat? Flowers are well enough in their way, but I've kept you from starving. You don't know what it is to be hungry—you ought to have had my experience when I came here, with a mere handful of berries, the first days. . . . What if I *am* late? Who decides the right time to come home? Isn't it the person who is out? If you can't wait for me, go ahead and eat alone, but try to understand I'm not staying away to be disagreeable—I'll get back as soon as I can."

As he proceeded, his protest excited him, and he put in the next roots with considerable anger. She waited till his pace had slowed up.

"It's not important now, as you say, but later it will be, when our household is more complicated. We are forming our habits now—why not sound ones? Our lives should coincide—you and I should expect to meet at certain times, and neither be delayed by the other. Adam dear—it's for your good I'm speaking."

He got up and stretched his cramped muscles.

"Are those flowers enough for to-day?"

"Well, if you have time, it wouldn't be a bad idea to fill all the space you've dug up. Don't bother if you're tired."

"I think I saw some of a different color, the other end of the orchard. I'll get those."

He started off with his stick under his arm.

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-by?"

He came back promptly and kissed her. She smiled her best, and patted him on the shoulder.

"Remember, dear, a woman likes attentions, but she doesn't like to ask for them."

It occurred to him that she'd be flattered if he turned and waved to her, just before disappearing, but his humor wasn't generous enough. He strode through the apple trees, toward the spot where the rabbit had been buried, where he had killed the small snake, where he had spent his first night or two on a mound of hay. That period of his life looked surprisingly well in retrospect. Momentary inconveniences had long ago dropped from the record—he remembered now only the keen edge of adventure, meeting the animals, exploring the road. The world would never be new again, and he was sorry. In a sense, of course, it was renewed when he met Lilith, or she had revealed it in a new light. Eve had novelty too, but no freshness. She had made the world grow old quickly. . . . Yet she had high ideals, he could see that. Something could be said even for being prompt. If he were expecting a person he loved, he wouldn't like to wait. . . . Well, he'd be patient with her, talk back as little as possible, and get home always on time.

He dug up the plants quickly, to keep his resolution. Now that he saw them again, he doubted if these flowers would look well in the garden—but she could decide. At least they'd fill the space temporarily. . . . Odd that so much of his life should be located now in this orchard, where he had begun. Not that it ever was his choice of a residence. The land didn't lie high enough. But it fell away, where Eve's house was—there, in comparison with the river, it was high. What an elevation Lilith had

chosen! Extraordinary woman, Lilith. He'd like to see her again. She lacked Eve's passion for getting everything just right, but as a person to live with, hour after hour——

A swishing sound in the grass made him turn. It was Towser, overjoyed at the meeting.

"Come here!"

Towser came at once, with his eye on Adam's stick, but wagging his tail. Adam cautiously patted his head.

"Well, Towser, it's like old times."

Towser panted hard, with his tongue out.

"Been killing anything recently?"

The dog lifted his deep, sad eyes. Adam looked for the murder in them, but saw only friendship.

"We've both changed, I suppose. Some things don't trouble me as they did. . . . Want to come along?"

He picked up the plants and started home. Towser raced up and down, exploring the grass, chasing insects, always returning to assure Adam he hadn't deserted him. Adam remembered the cat in the house. Well, he had as much right to a dog as Eve had to a cat. If the dog killed the cat, perhaps it would be a good thing. Eve would have to see what a world this is, full of natural antagonisms. He didn't want her to be wounded with the sight of a dead rabbit, but a stiff bout with the cat wouldn't be so bad—lots of spitting and scratching.

In spite of this bold philosophy, he was slightly nervous as he drew near the house. She wouldn't like the dog—he knew it from her behavior that day at the river, and the fact that he brought the animal home would prejudice her the more. Oh well, Towser needn't stay. If only the cat objected, perhaps he could use the stick

on the cat. . . . In sight of the door, he called. She would come and he would wave to her, as though one always came home on time, bringing a dog. But she didn't come out. . . . He searched every corner of their scant shelter, behind all the neighboring trees—she wasn't hiding, she was gone. The cat too. Towser sniffed the ground over, came to Adam, standing perplexed, and looked up as though to ask where the family were. Adam sat down on the grass.

"We're home early, Towser. This household doesn't eat before or after the sacred minute. This is intended to be a lesson to me—for my good."

But when hours passed and still Eve hadn't returned, he took another view of it. Something unpleasant must have happened. She had said nothing about absenting herself, and there was no need of it—he had left fruit and water and those roots, if they interested her. She wasn't a person to go walking for pleasure, and she didn't care enough about swimming to try it unless urged. What could have harmed her? The horse? The bull? . . . He knew such guesses were silly. The ground was marked with no hoof-prints. No, she had left him.

The sun moved toward the west. Adam and Towser were growing disconsolate. If she went of her own accord, would she come back? The moment he asked the question, he knew she wouldn't. Not a thing about him pleased her—there wasn't a single reason why she should stay. Obviously not. He had supposed her too timid to run off. The mistake did no credit to his perspicacity. . . . He was surprised that he felt so badly about it, since he had intended, several times, to leave her. But

now she was leaving him. Perhaps she had some special grounds for dissatisfaction to-day. Ah, that was it—he hadn't waved good-by. She realized he was disciplining her, and she was too proud to put up with it! What a woman! She'd lose her way in the woods and starve, no doubt, and then she'd be on his conscience. The problem of food supply always presented itself when he thought of her. She was spiritual minded, of course, but he couldn't permit her to die on his hands.

When it began to grow dark, he had a lonely supper. Towser disliked fruit too. . . . Here he was, back in that first limited companionship with the dog. Meanwhile he had had two women, and through stupidity had lost them both. The net result, as nearly as he could strike a balance, was one house in an undesirable location, and an assortment of regrets. Up to a point life had improved, then it had slipped back—would it improve again? Not a bad notion, that! It was entirely possible, in the inscrutable plan of nature, that a third woman might come along at any minute. If she did, he'd be more conventional this time. The moderate course was best. With Lilith he had been too much on his guard, with Eve too little. Extraordinary how the early part of one's acquaintance with women had to be managed just so! Life wasn't long enough to live down first impressions. For example, with another woman, he'd be careful not to seem a man of leisure. Once they thought they could control all your time, it was hard to get loose. It was a mistake, too, to know too much, or to be obviously useful. Leave something always for them to do.

Suppose no other woman appeared! That too, in nature's plan, was possible. Nobody had guaranteed to

supply him with companions. Was he to spend his days with Towser and the horse? . . . Lilith would remain, to be sure, but perhaps she had got used to his absence. Evidently it wasn't easy to live any experience over again—you grew old too fast. Had she been lonely without him? The thought that solitude might have weighed upon her as it certainly did on him, induced melancholy. No, up to date he hadn't guided his life very well.

"Lie down, Towser!"

It was an open question, after all, how necessary women were. If you once cultivated an appreciation of them, you'd be lonely without the irritations of their presence, but wasn't it a sign of health in a man to be self-sufficient? Women suspected the truth. They were always trying to hold you, to keep your mind occupied, to set up rules for coming home. By instinct they knew that man if unchained would travel. The difference between the sexes must be this, that man wants to develop himself, be whole and complete, and woman wants some one to tell her she's beautiful, and all the rest of it. . . . Well, it didn't sound very kind, but if Eve shouldn't return, perhaps it would be wise to avoid further trouble.

"Lie down, I say!"

Towser preferred not to lie down. There was a form moving through the dark, to the right. Towser growled and bristled. Adam seized him by the neck, and grabbed the stick. It was a man or a woman, he could see now——

"If you'll get rid of that ugly dog, Adam, I can bring the cat home. She's scratching me to pieces with fright. Have you no sense?"

"Here, Towser, you'll have to lie down!"

"He'll have to go, bag and baggage! You can't ask a cat to be at ease with a hunting dog in the house."

Adam felt ashamed of himself as he sent Towser into the night, encouraging his departure with several smart blows on the head. When the danger was past, Eve came out of the shadows, carrying the cat.

"The poor thing ran away and climbed a tree. It took me an hour to find her, across the meadow, and then she wouldn't come down. She had climbed too high. I had to wait till she got over her fright."

"That cat frightened in a tree? She climbs trees every day of her life! Don't tell me you've been sitting around in the dark till that creature decided to come down!"

"She couldn't get down, Adam—her claws aren't shaped right—the poor thing slips and slides. I stayed to encourage her—I showed her how to descend backward."

She stroked the cat, which lay peacefully in her arms, quite unexcited.

"That's the silliest story I've heard for some time! Cats don't have to be encouraged, and they can climb down a tree without lessons!"

"So you're still irritable! I'm too tired to quarrel with you, Adam. You may say what you like."

"You're hungry too, aren't you? I'll get the fruit."

When he brought it out, she evidently expected him to share it with her, but he waved it aside.

"I had my supper hours ago."

She dropped the food and stared at him.

"You ate your supper without me?"

"Certainly. You weren't here."

She came to slowly, as if out of a trance.

"You—sat down—here and—ate—without me!"

It did seem a great mistake, the way she intoned it.

"I'm sorry, Eve. What ought I to do, in such a case?"

"Doesn't some instinct tell you what is courteous? You might have waited. You might have worried a little about me! How could you enjoy food while you were worrying about me? You might have come and helped!"

Adam saw a good chance to say something about punctuality.

"You don't consider it your fault that you're late?"

"My fault, when the cat got lost?"

He realized the futility of his position.

"Next time the cat gets lost, if I'm away from home, I'll come and help you find her—that is, if you leave word where you are. It's understood also that only one person in this house is ever late. That's me. All others are unavoidably detained. I'm glad to have that clear . . . I brought you some flowers—you'll find them in the morning, planted."

She ate in silence, less than she wanted, because he was looking on, and the attitude of injury had to be maintained. He declined to be impressed with the tears he thought she was trying to shed.

"You'd better go to bed, Eve. You look tired."

"Go to bed! With all I have still to do!"

"You'll need the rest. We're going walking to-morrow."

"I'd like to see myself!"

"Very well. I'm going walking. Don't wait any meals for me. I'll be gone a long time."

VI

He woke before she did and for a while he lay still, watching the sunrise. It made him think of his vigil on the hill-shelf, just as he was about to meet Lilith, but then he was in great discomfort, having recently encountered the ivy, and the ground was hard; now he could lie at his ease and watch the marvelous color-changes as the day came on. It was so beautiful, he had the impulse to wake Eve, but he remembered her need of sleep—rarely had he seen any one so tired as she had been yesterday. That was why she had said irritating things. That was why he ought not to have lost his temper, threatening to go away, and that sort of nonsense. As she lay there, sound asleep, he wished he hadn't been so hasty.

He ought to have known how different life would be in the morning. Most of his problems had become serious in the afternoon, or toward night. After a good rest they usually turned rather thin. Yesterday, for example. He had gone to bed quite angry, but now he couldn't recall what about. Oh yes—he had kept her waiting for him at lunch, and she had been late for supper. Nothing very tragic in either situation. Her reason for being late, when you considered it, was amusing—she had been helping the cat back down a tree.

Eve turned toward him and opened her eyes. Quite spontaneously she smiled, seeing him there, and impulsively he kissed her. The day began well. She was happy, he could see that—she was really happy now. In the cool

dawn he was conscious of her rosy exquisiteness. This was what he had threatened to leave! She was aware of him, too. Long afterward he remembered this curious moment, this interval of sympathy, which ought to have occurred on their wedding night.

"I'm glad you're still here, Adam! I had a fearful dream, that you went away forever. You said I might come too, and I tried to follow, but my feet couldn't move, and you went so fast! I was terribly frightened."

He kissed her again, conscience-stricken that his harsh words had haunted her.

"Where are we going to-day?"

"Oh, nowhere. I said that only because I was out of sorts and bad-tempered. We'll finish the garden and have a swim."

She squeezed his hand—a signal, he supposed, of consent and approval. They watched the light on the wet grass.

"Do you know, perhaps we ought to go somewhere, Adam. This home life must be humdrum after the adventures you are accustomed to. I've no right to keep you here all the time. Why don't you go for a long walk?"

"Alone?"

"If you like. Or I'll go too. So far, you've been devoting yourself to me."

"Well, I haven't found monotony in the house, not yet, and really I shouldn't know where to take a long walk. I'm for a happy day right here. We'll work in the garden, train the cat to climb, entertain the dog if he should drop in, have a swimming lesson. Why go abroad for adventure?"

But after breakfast she revived the subject.

"Do you realize you've never told me yet how you began?"

He was pleased, of course, that she asked about it at last.

"What did you see first, Adam? What happened to you that day?"

"Oh, nothing to speak of."

"I'd like to hear. You know all about me, and if I could hear your story, we'd be much closer, wouldn't we?"

"There isn't any story, Eve. I just found my way along the road, fell into the spring, scratched my arms in the berry-bushes, had a most wretched night on a hard bed."

"The spring near the pasture gate, where I found you?"

"Yes."

"I'd like to see the berry-bushes. Why can't we go there this morning?"

He couldn't believe she really wanted to see any particular berry-bushes. Perhaps it was an instinct of self-protection against her dark plans which made him averse to walking. Ordinarily he would have enjoyed such a ramble, but to-day he was content to be domesticated.

"I thought you'd like to go with me, Adam. So far we've done nothing but work—we both need a change."

"Well, if you feel that way, come along."

He started as casually as he used to when Lilith and he set out. Eve showed her surprise.

"Don't we have to get ready? There's a lunch to put up, and——"

"Oh, we'll find something to eat along the road. I never take food."

"Oughtn't we to, this time—as a precaution?"

She made up quite a package of fruit, with a few of his vegetables thrown in, as a sign of truce and cordiality. Altogether, an embarrassing bundle. When she began to walk, she had both arms occupied.

"Oh say, Eve, you won't enjoy it at all, carrying those things!"

"But I don't expect to carry them."

"Who will?"

"You, Adam dear. Aren't you going to offer your help? When a man sees a woman struggling with a burden, he carries it for her. It's an instinct with him."

Adam's instinct seemed to be dormant.

"But I told you it wasn't necessary to carry this truck!"

"So you won't help me?"

He took the fruit from her, clutched as much as he could under his left arm, and dropped the rest.

"Let's think this out a little further, Eve. Suppose a man meets a woman who's going the other way. Does he turn round and carry her packages for her?"

"Of course. He can come back afterward. It's an attitude, not a fixed rule. In a fine man it's spontaneous."

Adam walked on, deep in thought.

"I can see why they should divide the load equally, if they were going in the same direction—and if they agreed the stuff needed to be carried at all; but if a woman can always decide for me what is to be carried, and where, you mustn't expect me to get home on time."

"Don't be foolish, Adam. It's a mental attitude, as I said."

They were at the spot where he had heaped up the

experimental bed of hay. To explain the scene to her he needed both hands. He put the fruit down for a moment.

"That's where I saw the first pile of dry grass, and I stuck my arm in—so—to feel if it was soft. Then I took it over to that tree—come here and I'll show you—stacked it against the trunk this way—got another pile of hay over there—no, there—no, I was right the first time—that's the spot—and when I had put it on top of the other, I just lay down. Not bad, eh?"

"Wasn't there any other furniture? Poor man!"

"Yes, there was a stick—in case of attack by the animals."

"How terrible! They used to attack you?"

"No, they didn't. The stick was only in case."

He saw she was disappointed, and he wished he had invented a stirring peril or two, to invite her respect. He recalled the snake, but concluded not to enlarge on that episode.

"Didn't you ever have a fight with anything?"

How bloodthirsty she was! And how distressingly safe life had been!

"Well, I met the bull once."

"How exciting! What did you do?"

"Oh, I was just walking in the meadow, and I thought it was the cow. I'd learned how to pat the cow without annoying her, so I went up to practise, and the first thing I knew the cow began tearing the ground to pieces and snorting. It wasn't the cow, you see—it was the bull."

"How brave of you, Adam! Not many men would try to pat a strange bull!"

"I didn't, exactly. I told you, the creature began pawing and snorting."

"What happened then?"

"Oh, he came running at me, as fast as he could."

"My goodness, Adam! And you drove him off with your stick?"

"No—I went over to that tree—you can't see it from here, but there's a fine tree by the gate, and I climbed up and sat there till the bull went away."

"Oh!"

He had disappointed her again. He wished he had stayed at home.

"I told you how I fell in the spring. That's about all—except stepping on the cat."

"Adam, how could you?"

"Easily. The thing was lying in the middle of the road."

"You might have injured it for life!"

He looked around to make sure nothing was omitted from his reminiscences.

"Do you want to see where the rabbit was buried?"

She didn't, but she wanted to know who killed the rabbit, and when she learned of Towser's hunting proclivities, she seemed to think better of the dog.

"Why couldn't you take him out and let him catch a rabbit for us, Adam?"

"And what would we do with a dead rabbit? Or a live one, either?"

She didn't know, and the theme lapsed.

"Is the road far from here, Adam?"

"Why?"

"I'd like to see where the rabbit lived. Are there more of them, do you think?"

He showed her the way, without asking why she

wanted more rabbits. It had been a mistake to take this walk. The day had begun in high spirits, but the irritations were mounting up. She didn't look exquisitely rosy now; she was perspiring slightly, her hair was not at its best, and those strange lines in her young face contradicted the thought of pleasant vagabondage. She was a fine-looking woman when all the conditions were right. But she needed time and fair warning.

"Adam, have you ever given serious thought to making yourself useful in the world? A man with your gifts ought to accomplish wonders, but unless you deliberately try, you'll never get on. Hearing of your early days has explained you to me—I can understand some things better now. You accepted life as it came, didn't you! That's why you can't point to anything heroic or vital—such achievements don't simply come. It's not entirely your fault, of course, but from now on you ought to do better, don't you think? Comfort and pleasure aren't everything."

It was a sad error to give him advice just at the moment when he had discovered defects in her beauty.

"Oh, there's the road!"

He didn't reply, partly because he was angry with her, and partly because he had caught sight of Lilith, in all her peaceful loveliness, standing before them. She was waiting for them, and her smile of welcome was as serene as though he had never deserted her. There was the woman who had understood him, who was at home in this world, who had the secret of happiness! His spirit was inundated by a conviction that he had been a fool.

"Well, how are you two?"

At Lilith's voice Eve stopped, alert and cautious. She

knew the sound of danger. In the silence, Adam had the impression that the women were reconnoitering.

"You look awfully well, Adam."

"How's the calf?" said Eve.

"The calf died."

"I thought it would."

"It needed milk," said Lilith, unperturbed. "We couldn't do without the cow."

They stood again in silence, facing each other. Adam wondered if Eve was aware of the contrast. Lilith was never so glorious. She was carrying some red branches, and the color belonged to her.

"What are those?" said Eve.

"For my house. I noticed the leaves yesterday, and wanted to trim my room.

"They won't look well indoors," said Eve. "They should be left in their original environment."

"Well, since they're gathered, I'll take them home, and if they disappoint me, I can throw them away."

"I'll carry them for you," said Adam.

"It's not necessary."

"But I'd like to."

"Adam," said Eve, "we must be getting back."

Adam took the branches out of Lilith's arms.

"I can't let her carry these, can I?"

Eve's lips were at their thinnest.

"Adam! Where's the fruit?"

"I guess I left it in the orchard—I put it down for a moment."

"In the sun! By this time it's spoiled!"

She turned and went to the rescue, half running.

"Wait a minute, Eve! What difference does it make?"

She hurried faster. Lilith reached for the branches again.

"Hadn't you better go with her?"

"I should say not! I'll carry these home for you."

After a few paces, he turned to see how far Eve had gone. She was watching. Even at that distance, he knew what an angry woman looked like. When she was sure his eye was on her, she hurried away. He drew a deep breath.

"Well, Lilith—it's been a long time!"

"Hasn't it! I thought you were never coming back."

"I very nearly didn't."

They walked past the rabbit hole, past the tree where the dog had chased the cat,—they were almost past the gate to the meadow.

"Lilith—do you remember? The moonlight? And the cow?"

"I remember you and me."

When they reached the shelf on the hill, he stopped again.

"You know, those days weren't half bad! I'll never forget the time I brought up the hay, to sleep here, and you kept clearing it off and tidying up the place. You didn't know I was here."

Her familiar smile showed itself.

"Oh, I knew—I wanted to see how you'd meet the problem."

"How did I? I forget."

She laughed.

"You gave it up, and slept on the ground."

The unheroic fact sobered him, and there was no more conversation till they reached the house.

"Thanks, Adam—I'll take the branches now."

"But I'm going to stay!"

"Oh, no, you're not. You're going back to Eve."

Something very close to terror seized him.

"I want to stay here!"

She went into the house and laid the branches on the bed. When she returned, she came straight to him and took both his hands.

"I can't steal you away from the other woman—don't you understand? And I'd rather not seem to be stealing you away. You left me, Adam dear, and I shan't blame you for it, but now we'll both play fair with Eve. It was by accident we met to-day, but she'll never think so. If you don't go back promptly, my reputation will be a wreck, and you'll find it difficult to earn her forgiveness."

"I don't want her forgiveness—I've done nothing wrong! Anyway, I shan't see her again, and she'll be just as glad to be rid of me. She's satisfied with nothing I do. You ought to hear the number of serious faults I have!"

"I can imagine."

"Well, she can get along without me, and unless you object, I'll stay with you."

She stretched herself on the grass, white and graceful.

"It's not as it was before, you know. If we love now, it will be with our eyes open. You've lost the chance of being permanently happy. No—you love me, of course, and all that—but she'll be on your conscience, and she'll never give you up."

"That I don't follow. She doesn't care for me."

"For me, dear man, she cares even less."

He pulled at a blade of grass.

"In most things you're wiser than I, and I know I've been wasting my time, but if you'll let me, I'd like to come back. I know now, I love you."

She was frank, as usual.

"I've always loved you, Adam—yet that was no reason for detaining you when you wanted Eve."

"I didn't want her! I just——"

"Don't say anything more—please don't! Eve is a fine woman. She's beautiful, too."

"Not after you get used to her."

She said nothing, and the silence embarrassed him.

"If you don't want me, of course——"

Still she said nothing, and he rose to go.

"Oh, well, then——"

"Adam, is it fair to insinuate I don't want you? To shift the responsibility to me? I wasn't the one who went away. You were free to go, and we'll always be friends, but of course I was sad about it. Don't hurt me now in the way you come back. If you had left Eve of your own will, and had returned to me, I should have been—you don't know how happy."

"That's practically what I did! She saw I was on the verge of leaving, and she insisted on taking a walk today, to keep our minds off ourselves. I shan't go back. If you close your door to me, I'll go elsewhere, but not to her."

"Adam, dear—I'd like you to stay—but perhaps you'd better go elsewhere."

"Why?"

"Because she and I are rivals, and always will be. She's going to behave like a woman—that's clear. I've decided that one of us ought to play fair."

She stood up, and waited for him to go.

"Lilith, I'm staying. You couldn't do what wasn't fair. She's known all along that I love you."

"Does that help the situation?"

She really didn't look as though she wanted him to leave her. Perhaps she did. If he tried to kiss her now, and took her in his arms, he'd find out.

"Adam, you've no idea how lonely I've been!"

PART FIVE

THE FALL OF MAN

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I

Not until the third day did he worry about Eve.

It was worth while, the temporary absence with her, just to appreciate Lilith on the return. To wake up in the morning without an unwelcome duty staring him in the face! To end the day without a pungent summing-up of his shortcomings!

Lilith and he resumed their former life without wasting a moment on explanations or excuses. When he had first met her, he had surrendered unwillingly to her point of view, but now he was eager to recover it—he wanted her natural sanity again, the passion and the zest which in her did not exclude good humor and gentleness. Having lost her for a time, he was now alive to every tone of her voice, every thought of hers, every attitude of her body. She laughed at him because he forgot to eat, he was so preoccupied, and she flushed with pleasure when he asked how he could keep his mind on food, since he enjoyed once more the right to look at her.

They went swimming, and, because she liked it, he pretended to want to ride the horse. They took a long walk, not because they needed to inspect the landscape, but because they were happy together. Perhaps they felt, too, that sooner or later they'd come face to face with the fact of his desertion; so long as they were in motion, the danger was postponed.

But he came around to it himself at breakfast, the third day.

"My, but I'm glad to be here!"

Though she was slow to reply, he could see the subject did not frighten her.

"I hoped you'd come again—but if you hadn't, I should have understood."

"That's more than I can! I don't know what possessed me to leave. It was a form of madness."

"You were in love with her then—it's not very generous to say now you were crazy."

"Lilith, I wasn't a bit in love—not as I am with you."

"Dear man, it takes more than one form. Your love for Eve was of the involuntary, passive kind—a slow poison. You probably will never be cured."

"I'm cured now."

"You're thinking of her. She's a very attractive woman. She can't do anything for herself, can she?"

"I'd say not!"

"There you are! Nothing is so irresistible as incompetence."

"I didn't find it irresistible."

"Be honest, Adam—you liked to build her house, get her breakfast, and that sort of thing. Otherwise you wouldn't have stayed so long."

"She *is* incompetent," he said. "I wonder how she manages without me."

So Lilith knew he would leave her again.

"If you're worried, why don't you go see how she's doing?"

Adam was firm.

"I'll stay here."

But in a way, Lilith's very generosity was a disappointment. This complete understanding was all very well, but he had expected her to scold, be difficult, somehow. It was subtly mortifying to discover how little his absence had cut her up. While he had been undergoing mental agonies, trying to free himself from Eve, Lilith had been waiting tranquilly, undisturbed. Perhaps, after all, you couldn't be so placid and have any real depth of feeling. She was glad, of course, to have him back, but try as he would, he could discover no evidence of—well, what the occasion seemed to demand.

He had only a suspicion, the second day; on the third he was quite sure. He thought he might perhaps bring it to her attention, as they sat down to lunch. She gave him what he thought was an opportunity.

"How sultry it is! We'll have a shower any minute. It hasn't rained once since you were away."

"Are you glad I came back, Lilith?"

"Bringing rain, you mean?"

There, she could be flippant about it! He looked so solemn that she corrected her error.

"Adam dear, do you need to ask?"

"Well, if you don't care much either way, it isn't your fault. You have a right to be angry at me for going."

Without the slightest difficulty she saw through him.

"You mean, you've a right to have me angry at you—you're disappointed because I'm not. But I always said I wanted you only so long as you cared for me. If you still do care, you know I still do want you."

"You speak as though it were an unsettled question. *If* I still care!"

Before she answered, she made pretense of being busy,

offering him more food, bringing more water from the shaded corner of the house.

"Well, is it really settled? Are you to stay with me?"

"Don't you know I am?"

"As a matter of fact, Adam, I expect you to leave almost immediately."

She was entirely cheerful about it, and he felt hurt. She ought to have had more confidence in him.

"You see, Adam, Eve has become for you an object of pity and sympathy. I don't make that kind of appeal. You'll go back to her."

Adam felt as though she were trying to pronounce judgment against him. Would fate separate him from this blessed place, where she had made him happy? Not if he had his wits about him! He became quite indignant.

"I won't go!"

"You don't have to, of course. I told you what I thought would happen, not what I desire."

"How did we get on this subject, anyway? It's not cheerful. You used to advise me to live in the present and be happy."

"That is still my advice."

"Then let's—oh, let's go swimming."

"Doesn't it look like a shower? It's no fun swimming in the rain."

"Nonsense, we'll be back before there's a storm."

They walked toward the pool with less enthusiasm than he liked. She looked cheerful enough, but he felt oppressed.

"Lilith, the reasons you gave why I'd return to Eve, are unconvincing. I wonder if you believe them yourself."

"Yes, they convince me."

They walked on for a few minutes.

"They convince me," she said, "because I think our decisions in this sort of experience depend on little things. Of course it won't be your pity for Eve which makes you love her, but it will draw you back to see how she's getting on, and gradually she'll become a habit—and there'll you be."

"But you advised me to go and see how she's doing!"

"Certainly. It would be civil of you. And then, dear man, it's no use trying to hold you back."

He didn't find the answer he needed.

"Besides, Adam——"

She stopped, and though he doubted his senses, it did sound as though her voice were trembling.

"What were you about to say?"

She swallowed hard for a moment, and got control of her voice again.

"She will probably give you a child."

There were tears in her eyes.

"Lilith, you've no idea how much I love you, or you wouldn't be so melancholy! It was a great mistake, my going away—I can see that now—but you mustn't think I've grown tired of you, or shifted my affection to Eve. You're so much finer than she is, there's no comparison; you understand me, and you know how to live, and you always give your wisdom without seeming to—you don't scold. Of course she's a fine woman too, in her way—I've nothing against her, but I don't love her."

"She'd be glad to know you've nothing against her, Adam. One's husband ought to be at least as cordial as that."

"I'm not her husband!"

With this declaration he reached the edge of the pool. Lilith laughed and plunged in.

He had never seen her swim so gracefully. In the water her humor was always gay, and she called out compliments to him, on his own progress, which he hadn't the heart to interpret entirely in his favor. In fact, he stayed in only a decent interval, before getting up on the bank, to watch her. Could any motion be swifter, more powerful, more silent!

By contrast, he thought of Eve's splashings.

When Lilith came ashore, he questioned her on the future of human society.

"Why isn't there another man to take care of Eve? Suppose a third woman should come along. Would I have to look after her too?"

"Theoretically," said Lilith, "you could do as you liked."

"But if there are to be more women than men, what becomes of the theory?"

"What becomes of you, you mean. The women will fight over you, Adam. You will become unwarrantably conceited. You will think it is your invincible charm which makes the trouble, when my sex, if the truth were known, would fight one another even for a less valuable trophy. And it wouldn't make much difference if there were as many men as women. We'd all want the same man—for no good reason."

"I can see," said Adam, "it will be more difficult than I thought to lead a simple life. Men may seem to be less faithful than they are."

"Women, too."

"I can't admit that. A woman ought to be faithful. If she decides which man she wants, and gets him away from the other woman, she ought to be satisfied. No, Lilith, I couldn't care for a woman who wasn't true."

She was standing, looking at the quiet pool, and he was still seated on the bank, watching her.

"You know by experience," she said, "a man may be in love at various times with different women. Perhaps it's the same love, but you bestowed it on me, then on Eve, now once more on me. Why shouldn't a woman too be undecided and wavering sometimes, or changeable? Adam dear, there's no other man for me to love but you—I'm speaking only in defense of women. We ought to have the privilege of being at least as uncertain as men."

"I deny the illustration. I didn't love Eve!"

"You mean, you don't now. I'm horrified to observe how quickly we pass from your memory. If you didn't love her, why were you——"

"I've explained so often, Lilith, I think you might stop referring to it. But even if I were unfaithful, I don't see how that gives women any excuse. Eve wanted me to help her build the house, and look after her generally, but she had no right to me—if I leave her now, she can't say I deserted her."

"She probably won't. She'll just try to get you back. . . . It's going to rain, Adam."

They were sheltered in her house when the shower began, and they sat on the bed and watched the immense drops splash on the ground. It was a heavy cloud-burst, but brief, and before long the sun was brilliant through the last raindrops.

"The roof doesn't leak," said Adam.

"No—didn't you see how I thatched it?"

"I must have forgotten—when I put up that house for Eve, I just bent the boughs in at the top."

"Well," said Lilith, "if she stayed indoors this afternoon, she got wet."

The thought reduced him to prolonged silence.

"If the women are to be rivals for the man," he said at last, "how much freedom has he? That's what bothers me in your theory. A man ought to choose which he wants, oughtn't he? If he doesn't, it will be hard to be true."

She leaned back, with her hands behind her head. This problem of his moved her to laughter, but she was trying to consider it politely.

"Don't you suppose it depends on the women—and on the man? They all have a share in the choice, I think. If you miss what you really wanted, Adam, you mustn't blame Eve or me. We both are in love with you, according to our lights. You can make up your mind."

"But people seem different at different times, Lilith. Eve was rather attractive, once or twice."

"And I fail you, now and then? Of course. You must decide in the large—fall in love with the average."

"I couldn't love an average!"

"But you'll have to."

He fell into meditative silence again.

"Do you know," he said, "I'm sorry the cow died. This place hasn't been the same since. She stood for something—I don't know what——"

"Nature," said Lilith. "The maternal note. A sound philosophy. The creative attitude. I felt the same way about her. As long as you had the cow in your thoughts,

you made good progress. But I don't know that I grieve over her passing. What would be the use of an immortal cow? If we've caught a glimpse of that wisdom she stood for, the wisdom can be immortal. You remember, I said life was a tragedy. As soon as we have learned, the thing that taught us dies—and just because we learned, we grow fond of whatever taught us. That's why it seems as though the things we are fond of always die."

He didn't answer, and after a moment she rose and stood in the doorway. The rain had quite stopped. She turned to him.

"You say this place has changed. That might mean two things. You may have outgrown it. Perhaps you have absorbed all it can teach."

Adam was more interested in the other possibility.

"Or you may have forgotten something. Perhaps you understand less than you did."

"That's hardly probable, wouldn't you say?"

"Oh, it might happen. One can get out of the habit of fine thoughts. You may have shrunk a little. Or perhaps you were intended to grow only so far."

He knew she must be poking fun at him, yet she wore every appearance of seriousness.

"I mean," she said, "we tend toward the kind of life we appreciate. Perhaps we select our fate without realizing it. If we fall from happiness, it may be because we prefer something else."

"Even a fool would prefer happiness," said Adam.

This idea seemed not to interest her.

"I'm going after some food—I'll be back in half an hour."

"I'll come too."

"You'd better rest," she said. "I like to gather the food—you don't do it very well, Adam dear."

He didn't rest. He spent the time making up his mind how to dispose of Eve. She was in the background of all his thoughts—he couldn't talk with Lilith without being conscious of that frail creature down there in the orchard, miserably drenched no doubt by this time. He didn't love her, but there was a bond between them which had not existed between him and Lilith; he felt her as an obligation. It was quite unreasonable, but it was true. Unless she was provided for, somehow, he would have to look after her. He wished he knew how.

And he wished to heaven she had never appeared. If the cow hadn't died, would she have happened along just then, or would they have been in the field at the fatal moment? She might have come and gone, and no harm done. To think you could meet a woman so accidentally! She too, like the cow, stood for something. What, he wondered? If he could have been left with Lilith, in peace!

Lilith was admirable about it, on the whole. She must understand the situation, or she would reproach him. Clearly she never wanted him to go. Yet he was aware again of humiliation, that she missed him so little and forgave so easily. Did she really love him? He progressed to the broad question, how to tell which of two women loves you more. In general, he was disposed to say the one who made more of a stir. Lilith was passionate—didn't he know that? That is, so long as he remained. But she took his departure with a chilly ease. Eve wasn't at all passionate, yet when he left her she was terribly angry. How was that evidence to be weighed?

He wished he could think it out before Lilith returned, and then tell her which woman he wanted, permanently. It would be manly, and she'd like it, even though the decision went against her. He could say he loved her more than any other woman, but circumstances beyond his control—no, that wouldn't do. He had control. It wasn't a question of happiness—yes, that would do better—not happiness, but a sense of duty, to protect the incompetent. No, she would laugh at that. He oughtn't to speak of Eve in a disparaging way, not if he was returning to her. Perhaps there was some charm of Eve's which could be mentioned without suggesting comparisons. . . . But he really loved Lilith best—that made the problem.

Lilith appeared, with her arms burdened.

"I brought enough for Eve too, if you're going to see her. We've more than we need."

"She won't accept it—she's very proud."

"What of? The food is there—I'd give to any hungry person. I don't want her to starve just because she likes you."

"Well, anyway, I'm not going back. I've decided to stay with you, Lilith. I'll never see her again."

Lilith was genuinely surprised.

"Not see her again? What's that for?"

"I don't love her."

"Won't you meet the women you don't love? How inadequate your social perceptions are! You ought to meet them, just to establish a contrast. If you really love me, and if you don't love Eve, then I insist on your meeting her, once in so often."

"I shouldn't enjoy it."

"I hope not!"

"Well, I shan't go."

"I'll leave the vegetables here, where you can find them."

Neither referred to the subject again—not till the evening, when they had finished their supper and were enjoying the sunset. As the moments went by, Lilith's happiness grew; he was ashamed of himself for thinking her lukewarm about his home-coming. The old light was in her face, the immediate eagerness which first had charmed him; she was woman, face to face with her lover . . . They strolled toward the house at last, his arm about her. She pointed to the larder and arched her eyebrows.

"How will she survive without you, Adam?"

The simplest answer was to take her in his arms, and she was too glad to be there to say another word on Eve's behalf.

But long after she had fallen asleep, he lay by her side, his arm still about her, and wondered what would become of Eve, and what, if anything, he ought to do.

II

Before he came in sight of Eve's house, he noticed a dark, thin cloud rising from where he knew it was. A melancholy omen, he felt—what could have happened? He hurried—ran a little—almost dropped Lilith's vegetables. If his absence were really the cause of this——

Eve was sitting on the ground, feeding a small fire with sticks. The sticks might have been less damp—she leaned over and blew the embers whenever the smoke swallowed up the flame.

"Well, I declare!"

She leaned over and blew again, as though she hadn't noticed him.

"I brought you some food, in case——"

"Would you mind standing on the other side? You're blocking the breeze."

Her tone was soft—mournful, you might say, but gentle. He moved to the other side.

"What's that you've got?"

"This? Fire, of course."

Of course. He felt very foolish. The next question was, what good did it do. Perhaps that would come out casually, if he didn't betray his ignorance. He sat down beside her.

"Well, how've you been getting on?"

She didn't look at him, and she didn't answer. The fire was engrossing. She kept poking it or blowing. He felt unpleasantly superfluous. . . . The fire was quite

hot. She must have had a heavy chill, to want it in warm weather. She had something wrapped around her, too.

"Eve dear, you haven't been sick, have you?"

"Oh, no."

If ever he heard a discouraging accent, that was it. She didn't even want him to ask about her health.

She got up to look for more sticks, and he saw that the covering she had around her was fitted to her body; in a rough way, it formed a sort of extra skin.

"What's that you're wearing, Eve?"

"This? Oh, clothes."

"You aren't cold, are you?"

She found the wood she was looking for, sat down again by the fire, and began to feed the flame.

"Eve, are you wearing it to keep warm?"

"Of course not."

"Then why?"

"Because I don't wish to go naked. What a silly question!"

"But nobody else wears clothes."

It was a strategic error, and he realized it the moment he had spoken. What he and Lilith did, wouldn't serve now for argument with Eve. He sat watching her. She kept her eyes on the fire—or perhaps she was trying not to look at him. In either case, he could study her at leisure. The covering she had improvised had an odd effect—it really did make her more attractive. At least, it suggested more beauty underneath than perhaps there was. It excited his curiosity. About Lilith there was something splendid and final—since she couldn't be more magnificent, she carried herself with an open confidence, not unpleasantly bold. She was made to delight a man's

heart and eye. Her loveliness was too perfect to suggest much beyond—all that your heart could ache for, was there, absolute. Eve and her clothes set you imagining.

She went into the house, still without breaking the silence. He watched the fire, as stick after stick caught and consumed. The principle was simple—you kept adding sticks, so that the total quantity would remain the same. He put on a stick or two. Eve came from the house, obviously annoyed.

"Are you trying to put that fire out? It cost hours of work to start it."

She took off his sticks, leaned down and blew till the flame came up.

"Now have the kindness to leave it alone!"

With these plain words she retired again to the house. For a while he continued to watch the fire, feeling less and less comfortable. What was she doing? Didn't she want him to come again? If she didn't, that ended the problem. . . . He looked in the door of the house. As far as he could guess, she was arranging the clothes. Something didn't fit well over one shoulder.

"You're not angry with me, Eve?"

"Why should I be?"

Well, that was nothing for him to tell her.

"I just came back to see how you were getting on."

She was too deeply interested in the dress to reply.

"If you haven't anything to say to me—"

"What should I say to you?"

A fair question, too.

"Perhaps I'd better be going."

Apparently the idea failed to interest her, one way or the other. He started off toward the hill.

"See here, Adam—don't think you can come to my door again and insult me!"

She was standing by the door just mentioned.

"Good heavens, Eve, I didn't insult you—I brought you some food, and I wanted to be sure you were all right. Can't we be friends?"

She really was terrifying, she was so angry.

"You left me for that woman!"

Not caring to debate the matter at the top of his voice, he walked back.

"Didn't I leave her for you?"

"That's a very different thing!"

He couldn't see the distinction, and perhaps she felt it needed elaborating.

"In the first place, if I must speak of it, she's a bad woman."

"Oh no, Eve, you're quite wrong! She isn't that. She's one of the best women you ever met!"

"She's a bad woman, I tell you! Do you think I can't recognize her sort? She has no morals, no decency, no modesty, no—no——"

"Eve, you're away off! She's honest and frank, the most generous person you could imagine. What do you mean by having no morals?"

"If she had any moral sense, she wouldn't have taken you away from me. I'm sorry to state it so bluntly, but that puts her character in a word!"

"But I left her first!"

"I should think you would."

"Then why is it wrong to go back to her?"

"You needn't try to shield her. You had very little to do with it."

"Didn't I, though? Why shouldn't I go back to her, or why shouldn't she take me back?"

"If you have to be told—because I'm your wife."

He knew she was correct! Lilith was his love, but Eve had claims on him which could be urged in argument, and which were doubtless proved by the oppressive conviction that he owed her something. She was his wife.

"If you're going to stay around here, make yourself useful. I need fire-wood."

She turned into the house so quickly, he hadn't time to explain he wasn't going to stay, and he didn't like to tell her anyway—not just then, while her bad opinion of Lilith was still ringing in his ears. He would gather the wood, and then see what would happen. Of course she had no right to speak that way about Lilith. Decency! Modesty! New words, those. Not complimentary, he judged. He would ask her, later.

If she was his wife, he must be her husband. That was the other end of it. A kind of servant, not expected to change employers. Nothing in it for him. He would return to Lilith.

When he brought the wood, Eve was toasting the vegetables.

"You're burning them, Eve!"

"Cooking them, you mean. They're harmless, cooked."

Presumably the contagion of Lilith was to disappear in fire. But they were awfully good, cooked. Adam was helped twice. The moment he said he wanted some more, the strain was relieved—Eve became partly cordial.

"It does improve the food, doesn't it? How did you think of it, Eve?"

"How could I avoid thinking of it? It's the civilized way to eat. Animals take their food raw."

He couldn't think of an animal which didn't. Quite an idea, that! He wondered what Lilith's comment would be. She had never mentioned fire to him, and she ate food raw and she didn't wear clothes. He began to grasp Eve's point of view. From that angle, of course, Lilith might seem crude.

"You get used to it after a while, don't you!"

"To what?"

"To the fire. I was afraid it would be hot, but now I enjoy it."

She offered more vegetables, but he declined.

"We ought to have some fruit, too."

"I thought you didn't like fruit!"

"Not like it? Of course I do! But I can't cross the river—you know that perfectly well!"

"I'll get some for you, before——"

She looked up at him, and he didn't finish the sentence. It was silly to annoy her by speaking of it in advance. When he was ready to go, he'd go.

"I like the fruit riper than you brought before."

Yes, she was his wife. It was the sort of truth Lilith used to refer to, the kind you can't put into words, but which you experience. Each moment he spent with Eve he became more her husband. He hadn't planned it, but perhaps it was one of those relations you are born to. Eve didn't seem to be getting any happiness out of it, either.

He swam across the river and began picking the fruit. She could have done it herself, of course, if she really had wanted. When he left her alone, and worried over her helplessness, she discovered fire, and made herself a dress. She was helpless only when he was around. That's what Lilith had implied.

Wouldn't it be strange——

He put down the fruit he had gathered, and gave all his attention to the startling idea. Wouldn't it be the best possible arrangement to have the woman you loved the same person as your wife—Lilith and Eve in one, so to speak! It probably wasn't possible, but if it were, a man would be saved a lot of worry, and he could be altogether happy in one place. It would be pleasanter for the women, too, perhaps. For the one woman. What a simplifying thought! If he had begun in time, perhaps he could have persuaded Lilith to treat him like a husband, or Eve to make him her lover. But then, Lilith wasn't that kind of woman. Nor Eve.

He got the fruit together again, and started home. Perhaps it would be well not to mention the idea to either of them, but he could think of it himself, from time to time, when he was alone. A great mistake, to start useless arguments.

When he got back, she was making another covering for herself.

"What's the matter with the first one?"

"Nothing. This is better made, and it's more the sort of thing I should wear. There, it's finished."

"Let's see how it looks on you."

She walked toward the house.

"See here, Eve, what are you angry about now? Haven't I brought the fruit you asked for? And didn't I show an interest in your new clothes?"

"I'm not angry—I'm going to change my dress."

"Why don't you change it here?"

"What? Out-of-doors?"

She left him to digest his astonishment. She had to retire somewhere, in order to take a dress off and put one on! He had never seen the like—except in the case of Towser. Yes, that was a parallel. When Towser had something to eat, he preferred a secluded spot where no one was watching. The same instinct, probably. But how complicated life would be, if you couldn't act naturally outside the house!

Eve appeared in the doorway.

"Didn't you change it after all?"

"Of course! Can't you tell the difference?"

"I certainly can! That's a splendid dress, Eve. I congratulate you."

She turned around, so that all sides could be inspected.

"How long did it take to make it?"

"Oh, I don't know—I've been planning it for some time."

"Eve, just what is the difference between this and the other one?"

She retired to the house again, and he felt criticism in the air. Well, if it gave her pleasure, she might construct a new gown every day, but it was a queer taste. If she had two, she'd have to carry one around with her. That would always be awkward. You couldn't swim in the thing, nor walk through briars without tearing it. And why cover yourself, unless there was something the

matter with you? . . . How beautiful Lilith had been, when he and Eve met her!

"It's a question of modesty, Adam. If you once understand it, you won't be surprised that I decline to live any longer in the natural state which satisfies you and your friends."

She was wearing her old dress again, and she sat by the fire with the manner of having something to tell him for his good.

"In a sense, there's no reason why we should wear clothes, and none why we shouldn't undress in public. I'll admit we know all about the human body, and in itself it's not disgraceful. But clothing provides an opportunity to develop self-respect, and fastidiousness, and reticence. In other words, personality."

"That sounds plausible. I dare say I'd agree, if I understood any of it. If I should wear clothes, you think I might develop more personality?"

"I do."

"Haven't I enough now?"

"You'd develop it."

"Well, I don't see how. It's only one layer farther out or in. Once I got used to the clothes, perhaps I'd be as sorry to take them off as I'd be now to lose my skin, but what's the gain of that? Life is hard enough already."

"Adam, if you took your skin off, it would hurt your body, but to remove your clothes would hurt your spirit."

"Not mine."

"You'll understand when you've worn them a while."

He saw what was coming, and terror shook him.

"I won't wear them! I won't be seen in them!"

"You will," said Eve, "as soon as you are civilized. If I can keep you out of bad company for a while——"

"You've said that once too often! She's not a bad woman!"

As he raised his voice, Eve adopted a sweeter tone.

"I'm sorry, Adam, but she is a bad woman, and a very vulgar one. All your sentiments show what sort of influence you've been under."

He tried to recall what sentiments he had been expressing.

"She is one of those people who live in the senses. From my point of view she is shameless. Of course she shows herself on every occasion—she knows she's good-looking, in a bold style. Those men will always admire her who can be appealed to by such impudence. You told me she gave herself to you with no hesitation at all—that her kisses were for the asking——"

"She's the most adorable woman I've met, if that's what you're trying to say! She doesn't need to put on clothes before she can develop a personality!"

Eve became still more gentle.

"Adam dear! It doesn't help your case to shout at me. You lose your temper because you know I'm right. She's not a fastidious woman. If you find her adorable —but I hope you really don't. A fastidious man wouldn't."

While he was getting control of his temper, she poked up the fire.

"From the moment I first met you, I saw the latent fineness of your nature—all you needed was the propitious environment. If I'm mistaken in my idea of you, I shall be bitterly disappointed, but you are free to leave.

In fact, I shouldn't wish you to stay. But I believe I judged you correctly. You have a remarkable aptness for the more delicate side of life—you're intended to be as far as possible above this animal world which pursues us from every side, cajoling us, luring us down. What Lilith does is right, I dare say, for her. It would be quite wrong for you."

He couldn't deny to himself that he had noticed his high destiny, even before his wife pointed it out. From the first he had believed in his mission to advance the universe toward a spiritual perfection. But she was too hard on Lilith.

"I'd like to know what she'd say to this!"

"Who? Lilith? I know what she'd say."

"I think I do too. See here, Eve, if you're speaking for the higher aspects of life, you oughtn't to say such things behind her back!"

"I'd say them to her face, if she were here."

"I was wondering if you really would. Suppose we go to her now, and you explain why I ought to leave her for you!"

"How ridiculous! We can't argue over a man that way!"

"Well, I won't be argued at individually! You're afraid to meet her—as I suspected."

She dropped the gentle tone. "I'm not afraid! And I won't meet her. She took you from me!"

"She's thinking the same of you."

"She is, is she! If I ever have the chance, I'll give her a piece of my mind."

"Well," said Adam, "perhaps it can be arranged on that basis."

III

When they were nearly home, they came on Lilith gathering vegetables. Difficult though it is to gather vegetables gracefully, Adam noticed she was more than worth looking at, and her occupation of the moment was so innocent, so domestic, that he hoped Eve might be favorably impressed.

"Good morning, Lilith."

"Oh, hello!"

She stood up and smiled at them, cordial as ever. She looked at him first. When she saw Eve's clothes, she was the least bit startled, but at once grasped the meaning, and smiled more broadly.

"You seem amused," said Eve.

"Interested," said Lilith. "That's quite a dress. It's very becoming."

"If you really admire it," said Eve, "you can make one easily enough."

"It wouldn't be so becoming to me. I'm best as I am."

"That's the way I feel about it," said Adam. "It's pretty but not practical."

Lilith looked at the dress again.

"Eve made it to develop her personality," said Adam.

Lilith began to laugh.

"I told him that clothes are a dress for the soul," said Eve.

"Those of us," said Lilith, "who feel the need of no clothes may perhaps be thought to have no soul?"

She said it naturally, merely to inquire. Eve didn't answer.

"My own point of view," Lilith continued, "is that the soul ought to be a spring of happiness, not something to wrap up."

"Exactly," said Adam. "I had the same idea, but couldn't express it."

"It's hardly worth while exchanging points of view," said Eve. "We have nothing in common."

"Haven't we Adam?"

That terrifying look which he had learned to recognize, came into Eve's eyes.

"If you were not just the sort of person you are, you wouldn't say anything so low!"

Lilith met her gaze with the friendliest cordiality.

"Was it low, Eve? I've a habit of accepting the facts —they never embarrass me, especially when they're not my fault. We do share Adam, don't we? I wanted him all to myself. That would have been respectable, wouldn't it?"

"You wanted nothing for his good, I can tell you that! You've stood in the way of—of—of what he was intended to become!"

"Now, that's not clear to me. What were you intended to become, Adam?"

"Don't be facetious over a serious matter! You know what I mean!"

Lilith looked at Adam and laughed.

"This is rather hard on you, isn't it?"

"Eve," he said, "I wish you'd tell Lilith some of the things you were talking of to me—about your views of life. Food and clothes, and all that. And the home. No

argument—just tell her quietly. I'd like to get her point of view."

"I'm to submit my ideals to her criticism, am I?"

"You said you'd tell her to her face."

"This sounds formidable," said Lilith. "What have I done now?"

"I prefer not to say."

"But you did say! If you don't tell Lilith now what you said about her to me——"

"Please, Adam," said Lilith, "don't press the question. What a wife says to her husband about another woman should never be checked up."

"I'm not afraid to repeat what I said. I warned him against you. I told him you're a bad woman. And you are! When he didn't know a thing about life, you spent your charms on him, till he was in the trap. I never saw such a pitiful slave as he was when I rescued him!"

"Slave?"

"To your sensuality!"

Lilith looked at her seriously rather than indignantly. She appeared to be studying Eve's state of mind. Eve felt the silent demand for further explanation, and raised her voice.

"You used your beauty, not to inspire but to ensnare him! You accustomed him to an indolent, animal existence, so that your kind of appeal might keep its effect. All the while you knew he was born to use his mind!"

"See here," said Adam, "I don't follow this at all! Lilith and I did very well before you arrived, Eve. I was using my mind right along."

"And when you knew he had left you for me—and you knew why——"

"Why?" said Adam. "Eve, you can't take so many things for granted!"

"You tried to get him back—that's what you did! You are doing what you can now to break up our home!"

"Really? From what you say, I don't appear in a good light. He won't be unduly fascinated. And so far as I'm concerned, this encounter is accidental. But if you wish to label me with an unpleasant name, I don't mind. We shall never agree. I was happy with Adam, and if he had stayed with me, I should always have been glad. Since he prefers you, I keep my disappointment to myself. He's yours. But if he doesn't want to stay yours, don't ask me to catch and return him! So long as I love him, whenever he wants me, I am here. Isn't that wisest? You needn't feel disgraced if he leaves you—I had no conviction of failure when he left me. That's life, Eve—hearts are changeable."

"But they shouldn't be!"

"You mean, we wish it were otherwise? Or it's a crime to be as we are? I've thought of it both ways. Sometimes I wish he had stayed with me—and then I always add, only so long as he wanted to."

"You'd rather have love than faithfulness?"

"Exactly."

Adam wasn't getting from the conversation the illumination he had hoped for. When Eve said Lilith was a bad woman, Lilith hadn't annihilated her as he expected, yet on the other hand Eve hadn't produced evidence that Lilith was bad. The two women were settling down to what was after all a very normal discussion.

"I've been interested in what you two have said of me. Perhaps you'd like to hear how it strikes a man."

"Adam, we ought to be turning home. I must get lunch ready."

"You don't have to get it for me. You say I'm buried in the life of the senses, and then you're always urging food on my attention!"

Lilith smiled, and he felt encouraged.

"Now, as I see it, it's possible for a man to love two women at once—that is, if they're quite different. Lilith says the heart changes, but I think it has more than one taste, as it were. You like vegetables as well as fruit, don't you, Eve? It's the same way——"

"This," said Eve, "is really too gross!"

"Personal, rather," said Lilith. "One of us would have to be the vegetables."

"I'm serious," said Adam. "When I'm with Lilith, I'm happy, and when I'm with Eve I'm aware of my faults. One experience is pleasant, and the other is good for me. Of course, if I had my choice——"

"Now that's something like!" said Lilith. "Speak up, man—which do you choose?"

"Of course it's no use wishing for it, because it's impossible, but the best way would be to have both experiences in one."

"Amalgamate Eve and me!"

"Well, you see the advantage. Any man would rather have one home than two."

"You intend to have two, do you?" said Eve. "You're mistaken. In spite of your hopes, you're a decent man from now on. If you wanted to live with this woman, you should never have left her, but now you owe something to me."

She turned to Lilith.

"You keep your hands off him!"

Adam was never so mortified in his life, but Lilith acted as though such scenes were common. Very deliberately she stooped down and picked up the bundle of vegetables.

"Eve, I'll never take your man away from you. Even if you weren't here, I wouldn't try to hold him if he really wished to leave. But if he turns his back on you, of his own will, and comes to my door, and if I still feel toward him as I do now, why shouldn't I let him in? We're here for so short a time, Eve—if some one we love wants us, why should we cheat our souls?"

"Souls!"

"Yes, souls. To love, to pursue our dreams at least a little way, is good for the soul, isn't it? We do dream of happiness and beauty, don't we? Oughtn't we to dream still more? We can't attain very much of it, can we? Why not accept the fact, attain all we can, and be good-humored at the end? If Adam always wants you, you're a lucky woman. But if he ceases to want you, why not simply be thankful for what you've had? There's no reason why you and I shouldn't be friends. We seem to be rivals, but we're not—we're only two human beings, in the same fate, waiting for our quite different kinds of happiness."

She turned up the path toward her house, but Eve called after her.

"You and I friends? I despise you! What you've said is the essence of immorality! If men live your way, there can never be a settled home, nor sound society, nor——"

Lilith walked back, and raised her hand to interrupt.

"I needn't remind you, Eve, of the possibilities in your settled society. You will be Lilith to some other man."

They looked at each other, for once in complete understanding.

"I don't see that, Lilith. I happen to be the only man."

Both women laughed.

"Good-by," said Eve. "Come on, Adam."

He spoke little during lunch. Things they had said kept reviving in his memory, and he had to look at them from all sides before he trusted his interpretation. Lilith had been so little surprised at what Eve said. All very well for Lilith to be wise, as he knew she was, but this sort of conversation had never happened before, and he would have thought that somewhere in the talk she might seem to be feeling her way. She still believed that no dreams could be fully attained. A pessimistic notion, yet she was never more cheerful than when she was preaching it. She would always take him in, provided she still loved him. She evidently expected not to love him some day. That idea hurt. It would have been better if she had contemplated an enduring faithfulness, the kind Eve was always inculcating. He had made his own attitude clear —he expected to be faithful to both.

Eve brought out more food to put on the fire, and the cat followed her from the house. In her own way, Eve understood animals. That is, certain ones. She wasn't so remote from nature as at first he had feared. Since the morning's encounter she had been unusually serene. She wasn't at her best in an argument, but then, the result didn't affect her—when she had had her way, she felt better.

If Lilith hadn't a proper concern for the affairs of the spirit, he must ask himself again why she took the brute facts of life so easily, and why Eve took them so hard. When Eve prepared a meal, there was an earthquake. Three a day. To be sure, the food was remarkable, but was any food worth such upheaval? Lilith would say no.

And if Eve had such contempt for low things, as she called them, why was she so insulting when she got angry? Or why did she get angry? She really was rough with Lilith. Sensuality! That wasn't a pleasant word. He wished she wouldn't imagine uncomplimentary things about those she disliked.

"Eve, why did you laugh when I said I was the only man?"

Eve laughed again.

"Because it was funny."

"Isn't it true?"

"It isn't the sort of thing one says."

"But I *am* the only man."

"All right—you are."

"Then why did she say you'd be Lilith to another man?"

Eve bestirred herself about the meal. She must have heard the question.

"Why, Eve?"

"I'd rather not say. You'd think me hard on her, or revengeful, or jealous."

"I'll ask her, then."

"Do, if you think she'd ever tell you."

He returned to the subject after a while.

"I shan't misinterpret—I want to know why she said that."

Nothing could be more reluctant than Eve's manner, as she ceased carrying off the dishes and stood where she could look him in the eye.

"It meant what I have told you—that she's a bad woman. You think you had her first—she never loved another man! More men than you'll ever meet, Adam. She isn't young. Her idea of life is that every woman should deceive her husband. When she made that remark in your presence, she was less guarded than usual. She was advising me to keep you and love some other man at the same time, without your knowledge. That's the innocent creature you admire!"

"I don't recognize the description," said Adam. "It's malicious."

"It is? Then where did she learn so much? When you and I were married, you taught me about love, didn't you? Varieties of kisses and unmentionable assortments of behavior you said you learned from her. Very well—from whom did she learn? You're so simple, you never thought to ask, but I knew the moment I looked at her. Shameless thing! Stark naked, the two of you! You ought to see how ridiculous you look."

He didn't mind being ridiculous, but the idea that Lilith knew more than she should, cut like a knife. It was too nearly self-evident. That's why nothing surprised her! Why she wasn't embarrassed by Eve's onslaught! And if Eve only knew—Lilith was familiar with everything, from the first! . . . She would be faithful only so long as she wanted him! That's what she meant!

The fact of depravity he had not faced before. In

so new a world there was no occasion. Yet once looked at frankly, it could never again disappear from thought, he was sure of that. The world was spoiled for him. Of course he could avoid Lilith—he would have to now—yet she would always be there. If other men came along, she might seem lovely to them too—unless he could warn them in time. . . . It wouldn't be pleasant to warn them against a woman he had loved. . . . He could never say she wasn't beautiful. She was really more beautiful than Eve, yet Eve was the good woman! Awkward.

Now that he thought of it, Lilith had never said he was the only man she had loved—nor had he asked her about her past. In a sense, she hadn't deceived him, even if there were others. Why did Eve speak as though it were so wrong? To be quite fair, why was he so shocked when Eve suggested it? If Lilith had a past, perhaps she might have a future too; she might desert him for some one else. In fact, she herself had hinted at the possibility. Perhaps that was what hurt. If she had given up others so readily, she couldn't care much for him—she'd be reconciled to the next one.

Or perhaps the sting lay in the thought that their love was less absolute than it had seemed. Eve had merits in several fields—she didn't exhaust her possibilities in sentimental relations, but Lilith was in love or she was nothing. . . . That wasn't fair, either. But there was something in it. . . . Perhaps what he meant was that when you are in love, as he had been with her, the relation seems unique, and it's unthinkable, at least at the moment, that it could be duplicated. . . . If he weren't

in love with her, it would be easy to be broad-minded, but to know that their moonlight night, there by the meadow, had been for her only one of many episodes——

He wished he could talk this out with somebody. Impossible with Eve, of course—her attitude was biased, and, besides, she might think she too had a right to unique experiences in love. That would be unreasonable, but she'd probably think it just the same. When she met him she knew he was Lilith's companion; she hadn't been deceived. He had always told her everything, except one or two things which would have hurt her feelings without doing anybody any good. He wished she hadn't poisoned his thoughts with this suspicion. She hadn't any proofs, or if she had, she had forgotten to mention them.

"Eve, when you're through in there, will you come out a minute? I want to ask you something."

She finished her housework without undue haste. When she came she was humming a tune.

"You said you knew this about Lilith the moment you saw her. How did you know?"

"It was plain as day."

"It wasn't to me. How do you tell?"

"Oh, Adam, I couldn't explain it to you if you can't see for yourself. It's in her manner. She's very bold. She thinks nothing is improper, if she wants to do it."

"Then you're just guessing. You don't really know a thing against her?"

"I knew what you told me—isn't that enough? She was living with you, and she wasn't your wife."

"She was my companion."

"That's one word for it, of course, but you didn't consider her your wife, did you?"

"Eve, till you said you were one, I'd never heard of a wife!"

"You hadn't, but she had. She knew what she was about. For the moment you were the available man, and she amused herself till something better appeared. She was careful not to promise eternal faithfulness, I'm sure of that."

He was going to retort that she hadn't promised, either, but it would have been a waste of breath. Eve so obviously did intend to be faithful forever.

"See here, Eve, I'm wondering if there would be any harm in her knowing as much as you say. Suppose she has loved several other men—what difference does it make, provided I'm the one she loves now?"

"It makes no difference whether she loves you now or not. You're through with her! I'm glad I'm here to protect you, Adam. The cheapest kind of woman can make an awful fool of you."

Lilith a cheap woman! His heart ached for that beautiful comrade—oh, not cheap!—who had leaned with him on the pasture gate that evening, when their friend the cow had blessed them with her presence, and the moon had translated their feelings into light.

IV

Lilith was standing in her doorway when he came across the grass toward her. Something was amiss, she saw at once. He didn't answer her smile, and he didn't look straight at her.

"I had no hope to see you so soon!"

He stopped in front of her without replying.

"Dear man, have you lost your voice?"

"I want to ask you a question."

"Won't you come in?"

"Suppose we sit here outside."

She waited for his question, but he found it hard to begin. She wondered what had gone wrong.

"Lilith, I loved you more than I've loved any one."

"We were very happy," she said. "I know you loved me."

"Most of the good ideas I have about this world," he went on, "you suggested, or they're connected with you."

"I'm glad of that."

"You understood what I was trying to be—you have a wonderful gift for sympathy. You were a part of myself."

"I wanted to be."

He sat quite dumb.

"What is your question, Adam?"

"I—I don't know that I can ask it!"

She was surprised, and he saw she was.

"If you can't ask it, perhaps you ought not to try.

I don't know what it is, but some questions ought never to be asked, anyway."

"Which are those?"

"If having the answer would hurt more than not having it, I wouldn't ask."

"But I must have the answer!"

"Then you must."

She waited again.

"Lilith, when a man loves a woman, it's more than herself he wants. All the fine things she makes him dream of and reach after. You know."

She nodded.

"You are beautiful, but you always were—yet I wasn't in love with you at first."

She smiled slightly. "It's so with a woman, too," she said. "It wasn't just you I cared for."

"That complicates the experience, doesn't it! Kisses and embraces come to an end, but a picture, an image, something you caught sight of, remains."

She nodded again.

"And you don't want it spoiled."

"How could it be?"

"Easily enough. Suppose the person you loved—I can't say it very well. Did you get that effect from loving me, Lilith?"

"Of course."

"If you found out now I wasn't the sort of person you thought—that would spoil the memory, wouldn't it?"

He saw anger flash in her eyes, but only for a second. When she answered, her smile had returned and she spoke gently.

"The one thing which can't be spoiled is the good image of life I caught sight of, loving you. I dare say it's natural for men and women to disappoint each other—when we have suffered long enough, we shan't be surprised. But nobody is altogether disappointing if he has once been the cause of that vision you speak of. For me it's indestructible. If you and I had grown old together, what you once made me dream of would have stayed young."

Now he couldn't speak at all.

"Adam—what you came to say is that you loved me, but now you fear I am not the woman you thought?"

He couldn't answer that.

"What has Eve been telling you?"

"It's something you said yourself. You said she'd be Lilith to another man. Which other man?" said Adam.

"All this stir just for that question? Why, if there *are* to be more men—that's what I meant. She'll be an image of light-hearted freedom, I've no doubt, to some over-domesticated husband. Nothing against Eve—really a compliment."

"But have there been other men? Have you met any?"

"None but you."

"Then——"

He hesitated again.

"Now comes the question," said Lilith. "Dear man, what is it?"

"If you met no one before me, how did you learn so much?"

"About what?"

"Well—when I kissed you, that night—you remember?—you weren't surprised."

She looked steadily at him for a second. Her eyes were uncomfortably sharp.

"I see. Your wife has a nice mind, Adam."

"She's not asking you, Lilith—I am."

"Oh, I know. But who thought of the question?"

Since he didn't wish to tell her, he said nothing. She rose, and he rather expected her to send him away, she looked so indignant.

"If I asked you right out, Lilith, I thought you'd tell me."

"I will. Since you ask me right out, please understand you are the only man I have met. Tell your wife so. Tell her that before she gave you unworthy thoughts, you were the only one I wanted to meet. . . . Is there anything else?"

"Where did you learn so much—that's what I'm wondering!"

He was so persistent and so simple about it, she laughed in spite of herself.

"Adam, if you must know, I'm an experienced woman. I was born so."

She sat down once more, and he saw her moment of anger was passing.

"You said experience had to be lived."

"Well, dear man, I lived mine as soon as I could, but I was born with it in my nature. It's like the cart tracks in the road."

"What is?"

"Experience. Why don't you ask how the tracks came to be in the road, or where I got the milk pail, or

who planted the berry-bushes and the vegetables in time for us to pick, or why there are old trees as well as young ones? It's the same question in another form."

"Some trees are older than others because they grew earlier. That's simple. Vegetables too. But I don't understand the cart tracks and the milk pail. Where did they come from?"

"Some trees grew earlier, did they? Don't they all have to grow together, young and old? Don't the dead leaves help the new tree? It makes no difference when it all began—it couldn't have begun with young things only. That might have been pleasant, but it wouldn't have been this world. If there were young trees at the beginning, there had to be old ones, if there was a meadow, there had to be cows, wouldn't you think? And if a cow, then a milk pail, if a meadow, then a wall, if a road, then tracks. Roads are made by use—the tracks come first. And if there were to be understanding men and understanding women, there had to be something for them to understand. Some of us are born with experience."

"You mean, you were and I wasn't?"

"It seems so. You are our youngest tree."

"But I came first."

"You like to think of it in terms of time, don't you? Time may or may not have anything to do with experience. When you arrived, you had to get used to this world—you said so yourself. The moment I saw it, I felt at home. I've always known how things were to be used, how people would act—in a general way, what would happen to me. As soon as we met, I knew about love. Perhaps I lived it ages ago, somewhere else."

"Where?" said Adam.

"In some other world."

"Oh! . . . Then it works out backward—I came first, then you, then Eve, but I have no experience at all, you have a great deal, and Eve—she ought to have most."

"I don't say she hasn't. Eve is doing very well."

"But her experience is of a different kind. She isn't interested——"

"That I deny, Adam. There's only one kind of experience—life; it has to do with men and women. Eve and I have exactly the same interests, though our methods are not the same. When she says she isn't interested in what she calls the low things of life, I don't believe her. She certainly talks about them. What she calls low, I say is natural. She pretends not to approve; I won't pretend. Because I loved you frankly, she tells you I must have known other men, led a dissolute life, lost my soul, before I could know so much. Ask her where she learned that such a life as she describes is bad. Perhaps it is—I never led it. Where did she get acquainted with it?"

He was somewhat crushed, but not altogether convinced. He couldn't answer the argument—so far as he knew, there had been no men for Lilith to love—but a shadowy thought persisted, that if there had been, she would have loved them. Eve's question made him conscious of the idea, but it had always haunted him—he knew that now. She was born to be loved and to love. No objection, of course, so long as she loved only him. But once a thought like that took hold of you, it was hard to look at things simply again—it made you suspicious. In a way, his mind was soiled. He wished

Eve hadn't talked about Lilith—but if what she said was true, it was best to know it, of course.

Lilith laid her hand on his. She was sitting very close to him, and the beauty of her eyes almost made him stop thinking. They were affectionate and rather beseeching, he fancied. Probably she wanted him to drop this embarrassing subject.

"Adam, the sort of doubt which is perplexing you is part of your education. It would have come to you sooner or later, though Eve hadn't urged it. You are frightened because I know more than you do—at least about some things. You'll have to learn not to be, and not to imagine wickedness in those you fear."

"You're quite mistaken—I'm not afraid."

She ignored his protest.

"Some people learn about life by sampling a little of it, and then thinking it over and discussing it, and then trying some more. If that's your way, be kind to your friends while you're acquiring wisdom."

She waited for him to say something, but he had only a dull stupid pain in his heart. From her eyes, as she waited, he saw the beseeching look die away.

"I didn't mean to be unkind, Lilith—I asked because I loved you so much."

"Oh, was that it? Because you loved me, you had to ask whether I wasn't hiding from you a disreputable past! No, Adam, you had ceased to love me. That's really what you came to tell. . . . It's all right. Since you no longer care——"

"I do love you—you've no idea how much!"

Her eyes looked rather weary now.

"Perhaps we don't mean the same thing."

Well, he had asked her, anyway, and she had told him—just what? He walked home to Eve very deliberately, trying to sort out his emotions and his thoughts. There were old trees in the world, and therefore Lilith had never met any other man but himself. It came to something like that. Cart tracks—and the milk pail—and the stone wall! And who had built the fence they had leaned on, or cut the hay that had served for his bed?

Yet if his suspicions were correct, then he wouldn't be the first man, after all! But of course he was. That's what made it so puzzling. Could the world begin all at once, with everything running smoothly, just as he had found it? Had it begun at the same moment with him? Or was it ready a long time before, and waiting? Lilith considered it an excellent world, on the whole—she had a fondness for nature and for the animals and for almost anything that was likely to happen anyway. Eve didn't think it much of a world as yet—for her it hadn't really begun. Lilith, if he had never left her, would have treated him as the first man, but Eve undoubtedly thought no better of him for preceding her. At the present moment he got small comfort from his seniority.

If Lilith were what Eve said, how could he explain the happiness of that evening by the meadow gate, and the comparative gloom of his wedding with Eve? Was it through wickedness that Lilith had discovered the secret of spontaneous joy? Torn as he now was by mean suspicion, yet he'd have to admit there was no flavor of wickedness in anything so lovely. That was a good point too, Lilith made about Eve—where did she

get such a prejudice against nature? Had she stored up unpleasant experience in another world, and now was on her guard?

Why hadn't he brought some experience along with him? Or were women different from men in that respect? If so, they'd always have a certain advantage. That, however, would be improbable. Perhaps they were started off this way to give them a fair chance in the world. At best, their abilities were narrow, any one could see that. And if they weren't very careful, no one would love them. Apparently they knew that by instinct.

When he came to the house, he wasn't in a good mood. Eve had the fire going and was cooking a savory mess; from the sweetness of her manner he judged she wanted to tame him by feeding, and he resented her strategy. She had on her better dress. On the ground near by another garment was lying.

"Well, did you have a satisfactory day?"

"I suppose so. What's that?"

"A new kind of stew."

"I mean on the ground there."

"Oh, that's a surprise for you. Do try it on!"

She held up a garment like her own, but much larger.

"Do you think I'm going to wear that?"

She looked hurt, and stirred the stew pathetically.

"I made it for you, Adam."

"But you knew I'd have no use for it!"

"I hoped you would, dear, if I made it."

"You don't think I'm all right as I am, eh?"

"What a question! I think you'd look much better properly dressed."

"Well, I'm sorry you had the trouble for nothing."

She put some wood on the fire, stirred the stew a few times more, and went into the house for additional ingredients. While she was gone, he picked up the offensive gift and examined the material. When she came out, he was holding it against his stalwart form, to get some idea of the effect. She made no comment, and pretended not to notice.

"I went swimming to-day, by myself, and got on well. I must show you what I learned."

He gave a slight grunt, denoting interest.

"And what do you think—the cat caught another mouse!"

"What good will that do?"

"It's one mouse less, isn't it?"

"Well, I've nothing against the mouse."

She poured out some of the stew, and though he would have preferred not to contemplate food at the moment when his spirit was shattered by profound problems, yet it was easier to eat than to argue, and the thing did taste well.

"I happened to think of your clothes, Adam, just after I was swimming. You know the place under the tree roots, where the water's smooth? I was looking in, to see how my gown fitted around the neck, and it would be ever so much smarter if I had broad, handsome shoulders like yours. The idea flashed on me, how becoming it would be. But if you don't really want the dress, I can cut it down."

"If it's just a matter of good looks, I'll stay as I am. I don't want to be any handsomer."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you—I saw another rabbit! Do you think you could catch him for me?"

"What for?"

"You ought to have meat, Adam. Fruit isn't enough for you, nor vegetables; you need something to keep up your strength. I've thought how to cook the rabbit."

"All I have to say is, it's a disgusting thought! Why not eat the cow while you're about it? Or the horse?"

"It's not disgusting—it will be delicious. Catch me a rabbit and I'll show you."

"Just wait till I do!"

She took offense at his sneering tone.

"Nothing I ask of you is proper, is it! You won't wear the dress I made, and you won't——"

"I won't murder a rabbit for you—that's settled!"

"There'd be some sense in your attitude, Adam, if you didn't object to the dress. You can't call that murder."

He looked at the clothes again. If she didn't make too strong a point of it, he might try them on, to please her. She'd probably forget afterward, and he wouldn't have to wear the wretched things.

"Did you see Lilith to-day?"

Her voice was unbelievably casual. He tried to imitate her ease.

"Who? Oh yes—I happened to meet her—over her way."

"What did she have to say?"

"Hm—nothing very illuminating."

He wasn't accustomed yet to play a part, and his conscience smote him.

"I must say, she's a beautiful woman!"

Eve cleared away the remnants of the meal, in silence. Something had plunged her suddenly into deep thought.

V

He had started only a moment before to bring up some wood for the house, but he came in with a heavy wrinkle on his brow.

"Just look at that, Eve—ripped right across the back. I felt there was something wrong when I put it on. My new coat, too—it's the third time I've worn it."

Eve took a careful look at the coat, while Adam tried to bend his head around to see it with her.

"You don't mean you're wearing your best clothes to gather wood? Take that coat off and let me mend it, and put on the old suit, as I told you."

"I'll go without—there's no one around—but I won't wear that blanket again, I told you I wouldn't! It's not becoming to me."

Eve sat down and began to sew, while he settled himself to watch.

"I'll have it finished when you come back with the wood."

"Oh, there's no hurry—I can wait."

"Adam, you're not going to put this suit on till your heavy work is over. This is for dress."

"Then why don't you make me something that's fit to work in? You don't expect me to go naked, do you? I thought we'd got beyond that, months ago. The last time I went out that way the dog looked at me. I swear he did."

She held it up against the light, to see the effect of her first stitches.

"Say, Eve, while you're about it, will you put a collar on? It's too abrupt around the neck. I don't feel finished."

"You need no collar. The neck is twice as high now as on my coat."

"Well, I've told you what I thought of that. You're the one who began this clothes habit, yet you're always cutting pieces out in the strangest places. If there were a man around here, I'd——"

"Of course you would! Very sensitive! You must have blushed every moment you were with Lilith."

It was out of order to mention that name, and she knew it. The mending went forward.

"I could make a very attractive collar," she said, "if I had the material."

"What? I'll get it."

"I was thinking of a rabbit skin."

"But you'd have to kill the rabbit!"

"I suppose you would."

"It wouldn't be long enough."

"Oh, yes, cut into strips."

"I might find one that had just died. Would that do?"

For a second or so, Eve was intent on a stitch.

"If you can't make a collar, how about something for the head? I feel quite uncovered."

"What nonsense!"

"All very well for you—you have a mountain of hair! But I don't look balanced. I need a hat."

Eve bit off the end of her thread.

"Balanced!"

"Yes—there ought to be an even distribution in cloth-

ing. A large section in the center, of course, but something important at each end. That first suit you made rolled up on me like a rug. That's why I can't wear it—with my head sticking out and my feet opposite."

"For a man who doesn't believe in clothes you're quite critical. I like the first suit because it brought out your slender lines—the ones which still are slender. And it suits your character. It's refined and severe. That's the best taste."

He gave a slight snort.

"When you come back with the wood," said Eve, "I'll tell you something, on a more important subject than clothes."

"Tell me now!"

"When you come back."

"I won't go till you tell me."

She handed the mended clothes to him.

"Am I to wear these?"

"As you like. I've expressed my own wish."

"Now see here, I'll wear the old suit if you'll tell me!"

To show good faith, he slipped it on. She couldn't suppress a laugh.

"What a boy you are, Adam! Well, I really want to tell you—we're to have a child."

He sat down across the room, very serious.

"You're sure now?"

"Yes."

He looked at her, with a wrinkle in his forehead.

"Of course," he said, "I think first of the responsibility. I'll have to provide for it—but that's the easy part. Then I'll have to bring him up."

"It might be a girl," said Eve. "No telling."

"Of course—I was supposing a boy for the sake of illustration."

"And I may bring her up myself. No harder to bring up two than one."

"Which two?"

"Why don't you think of me a little?—I'm to have the child."

Adam considered this aspect of it.

"Isn't that a woman's destiny, Eve? Nature arranges it so—it must be essentially right."

"Even if it is, you ought to be interested. You'll have to bring all the wood, Adam, and do some of the housework."

"Of course."

"You should have learned to cook, long ago. When you come back now, I'll give you a lesson. You can get the supper."

"Oh, I shan't need much to-night—something simple."

"But I'd like a good meal, if you don't mind."

He showed no inclination to move.

"The first child would be a boy, wouldn't you think?"

"I've no idea, Adam."

"Well, that would be the reasonable order. He'll have a good time in this neighborhood, where we know the animals and all the roads—think of teaching him to swim, Eve!"

"He isn't here yet."

The more he thought of it, the more excited he grew. To have a son! He and Lilith had talked of children, and Eve had often spoken of family life, and he had imagined he understood! Now, with the prospect upon

him, he was immensely roused. Nothing so important had happened before. Perhaps this was the purpose of his existence—to carry on the family name, and bring up a child to complete whatever he had missed or left unfinished. When you looked at it that way, life was not so short after all—it stretched from generation to generation, son after son inheriting his father's appearance and his character. A hundred years hence some little Adam would be growing up to pick berries, to pat the cow, to get in the poison ivy, to meet Lilith and Eve—— The meditation broke off.

He'd like to tell Lilith about it. She could share happiness with you better than Eve. Just see how cold Eve had been, breaking the news only to trick him into wearing his old suit! But Lilith would have shared his excitement. . . . On the other hand, if he went up the hill again, Eve would make an awful row.

When he returned with the wood, she was taking a nap. It was a pity to disturb her. If he hurried, he could probably get back before she woke up.

When he reached Lilith's house, it was empty, and he was subtly annoyed that she wasn't there when he wanted her. The place was as tidy as ever, and it had all the signs of being occupied—she was absent only for an hour or so; he would wait. But it wasn't pleasant to sit on the familiar flat rock and remember all that had occurred in that limited area—the happiness and the disillusion. Perhaps it was a mistake to come. Especially if he should be late, and Eve should awake before he returned.

He recalled the talks he and Lilith had had about children. Was it altogether the thing for him to bring

the news of his impending fatherhood? It couldn't be kept a secret indefinitely, and from many points of view it would be well to tell her now, before she found it out accidentally—yet perhaps it wasn't tactful. . . . If Eve woke up before he got back, he couldn't explain where he'd been. She wouldn't believe Lilith had been absent during his call.

Having a child was a blighting sort of experience unless you could talk about it. If his choice had been free, he would have talked about it to a man—one who naturally shared his attitude. Eve exaggerated the woman's part—Lilith, being a woman, might agree with her.

But parenthood was an expansive exercise of the soul, stimulating courage and imagination. Once it came upon you, you were ready to undertake drudgery or peril, for the sake of the youngster, because you could see the benefit to be enjoyed years perhaps after you were gone. . . . If she did wake up, she might get started with the meal—cooking wasn't going to be easy for him. A nasty job, no matter how well it tasted.

A son would probably understand his father better than any woman could. Naturally. Like answering to like. How life does teach us! He had talked about a companion till he had almost worn out the word, and all the time he had meant a son! Women weren't companions—they were means to that end. If he had known it at the start, it would have saved a heartache or two. . . . He would accustom his son, from the beginning, to an uncooked diet. In spite of Eve, the simple ways were best. . . .

Lilith was standing before him.

"Where'd you come from? I didn't see you."

She took her old posture on the grass beside him.

"I was exploring the other side of the hill. We ought to have gone there, when you were here, Adam. . . . Well, what have you been doing?"

"Nothing much."

"How's your wife?"

"All right."

She turned over on her back, and looked up at the sun. Adam suddenly remembered his clothes. She had never seen them before. She had made no comment! His face became hot. Why hadn't he left them in the bushes, near the spring?

"Adam, I thought of you the other night. Did you notice that very bright star? I was looking at it, and wondering about nature, and why we are made so, and how to use the world best—and I should have had ever so much more intelligent thoughts if you had been here to talk to. I was asking myself if I liked the stars only because they are bright, or because they move so steadily and all together. By themselves, of course, they aren't much, as light. But they have lovely habits. I was thinking that perhaps men and women—you, for example—might seem very remarkable if they could be studied in their habits and from a distance. Our behavior perhaps makes an attractive pattern, going round and round forever. What do you think?"

"I'm going to have a son," said Adam.

"I hope you will—it ought to do you lots of good."

"But I *am* going to have one—Eve says it's on the way."

Lilith sat up.

"I didn't catch your meaning. That's awfully fine, Adam! Aren't you and Eve excited?"

"I am—very. She's rather calm. I suppose it can't mean so much to a woman, but it's more important for a man to have a child, Lilith. It's hard to put it into words."

"Oh, I understand you—quite! You're sure it's going to be a son?"

"Well, it might be a daughter, if there weren't so many women already. That seems logical, wouldn't you say? And a son would be the best sort of companion for a man."

"Wouldn't Eve like a daughter? I would!"

"I didn't ask her. Why should she want a daughter?"

"If I had a child, I'd enjoy bringing up a girl. I'd save her so much trouble in advance, and show her the nice things in advance, too. It's a pity to waste time. You know, Adam, I've come to believe nature is stronger in woman than in man. Something grows through us, as it stirs in the trees and in the earth—there are nights when I feel I'm a part of trees and earth—that's why we understand plants and grass and blossoms——"

"Don't I understand them?" said Adam. "Yet I never confused myself with a tree."

"Your child brought it to mind. Do you know why I most envy Eve? Because life is unfolding through her as it unfolds through the soil—the same light must be over her as kindles the roots of the vegetables. Adam, do you remember the cow when she was going to have the calf?"

Vegetables! His wife! . . . The cow! Eve! . . . The calf!

"I'll have to be going. I promised to do the cooking, and I'm late now. I thought you'd like to hear the news."

For once he puzzled her. She had no idea why he ran away.

But he hardly slackened his pace till he came to his own door-step. Eve was right—terribly right. That woman on the hill had a vulgar mind. His son on the same plane as the cow's calf! And he had praised her understanding!

Eve was tending the fire, but nothing as yet was cooked.

"What excuse have you this time, Adam?"

"Am I late? I didn't mean to be—the wood took me longer to gather than I expected."

"You needn't fib, Adam—the wood is here. Where have you been?"

"Nowhere in particular. I just——"

"Put on your old suit and set the stew on the fire. We'll have to do with it warmed up, I suppose. I'd think a man would feel responsibility, after the news you had to-day—of all moments to wander off and neglect the house! Is this the way you're going to treat me when we have the child to look after? Tell me the worst now!"

Adam took the long spoon in both hands, braced himself firmly, and began to stir the thick stew.

"Stir it the other way," said Eve.

The spoon reversed its orbit.

"It isn't that I mind your walking occasionally, if you enjoy being alone, but you don't tell me when you intend to be late, and I can neither plan nor count on you. If

you had the comfort of the house to provide for, you'd see the selfishness of coming and going at irregular hours."

He thought of various methods to prove his good will. She certainly had been kept waiting for the food, and perhaps hunger made her cross. Thank heaven she hadn't questioned further about his wanderings!

"Eve, I've an apology to make. You were right about Lilith. She's vulgar."

"How'd you find that out?"

"She says you are creative, like the cow. Apparently she considers the idea beautiful. You are a part of nature, and you'll bear a calf-like son."

"Will you please tell me when and where Lilith discussed me with you? Is that where you were?"

Adam took the spoon out and gesticulated with it.

"I only went up to tell her about my son. She's an old friend—why shouldn't I? And she was immensely interested."

"She was, was she? Can't you keep your affairs to yourself, man? What business is it of hers whether I'm to have a child? If you wanted some one to talk to, why not me? I can't understand you, Adam. If I weren't slaving to make you happy, there might be an excuse."

She was so close to tears that he hastened to serve the stew, but his tender of food ended communication between them, for the time being. She went into the house, sobbing audibly.

"Come on back, Eve—I'm sorry."

The sobs, he noticed, were rhythmic.

"I said I was sorry."

She grew louder, if anything.

"If you don't come, it'll be cold."

Since she didn't come, he ate it himself, while it was still warm enough to convey inward satisfaction and help sustain the weight of care.

VI

He would not have hunted the rabbit if she had not made an issue of it. Never had she been so unreasonable. For weeks she had nagged him. He had explained the undesirability of encouraging the dog in murder, or the unpleasantness of committing murder himself, even if without Towser he could catch the rabbit, but she took an arbitrary stand and said it was no more murder than to pick vegetables. Unwilling to get lost in that sort of argument, he had let the subject go by default; when she mentioned it, he either didn't hear or he spoke of something else. She then became hysterical. During these last months she frequently lost control of herself whenever she wanted something he preferred not to give her. If he didn't comply, she told him the disappointment might seriously handicap the coming child. Just how, he couldn't guess, but the possibility was disturbing, so he usually gave in, after a decent period of protest. To-day when she called for meat to put in the stew he might have succumbed without a word if his memory had not insisted on the tragic end of the first rabbit.

"Eve, if you saw the thing limp and dead before you, with its eyes glassy, you wouldn't want to eat it. That day I told you of, when the dog brought that small body to me, I could have cried. For hours I was crushed with gloom. The stew's very good as it is."

"Fiddlesticks! You don't want the trouble, that's all. If I were in my usual health, I'd catch it myself."

"I'm afraid you would. I fear you'd enjoy wringing the creature's neck with your own delicate hands. That's because you're so far above our vulgarity. We low people aren't civilized enough to want to kill."

It was then she became hysterical, which he thought was rather mean of her because his answer had been one of his best, and deserved her full attention. But what could he do? She said the child might arrive any minute now, and he guessed she was right, and it would be unpardonable to let the child get his first impression of his parents in a violent quarrel. He sat down beside her and put his arm around her shoulder and patted her with his hand until gradually the sobs came to an end.

"This isn't good for you, Eve—you oughtn't to cry so hard."

She began again.

"Now look here—if it makes so much difference to you——"

She stopped in order to hear the rest of the sentence.

"I might make an exception and get you one rabbit, but you mustn't ask for any more."

"I never did, Adam, I just wanted one rabbit."

So he went hunting.

He spent the morning looking for the dog. Towser was always around when he wasn't needed, but now he had disappeared without a trace. Adam started through the orchard, crossed the meadow as far as the spring, came back by the road. Toward noon he reached his own door. Eve was busy inside the house.

"Eve!"

When she came out, she was disappointed to see him with empty hands.

"That's all right—I'll catch one before night. None are walking around this morning."

"Why did you come home now? Aren't you losing time?"

"I came for the cat," said Adam. "If I carry the cat to the road, and put her down almost anywhere, the dog will dash out of the bushes and chase her up a tree. It's happened to me so often, I can count on it.

"But why chase the cat up a tree? How cruel!"

"Then I'd have the dog to go hunting with, that's why. I can't find the dog."

"You'll find it some other way! I'd like to see myself torturing the cat just to save a lazy man some effort!"

"While I'm here," said Adam, "is lunch ready?"

"It is not. There will be no lunch till you catch the rabbit."

She went into the house again, and he started back through the orchard. He had no clear idea where he was going, but an old memory took him to the spot where he had been frightened at the snake, and so on to the bushes where he had gathered his first breakfasts. Not being in a sentimental mood, he continued till he was passing the hole in the wall where the first rabbit had lived. Two bright eyes were looking out at him. He stood very quiet—for hours, he thought—till the son or grandson of his early friend plucked up courage enough to crawl forth. Exactly the same! If his own child should resemble him so faithfully, Eve wouldn't be able to tell them apart.

More patience brought the rabbit at last within reach, and he caught it, as he had its ancestor. The same frightened heart beat in his arms, and he stroked it down

at last to the same trust in him. All he had to do now was to take it home to Eve. . . . He gave it a concluding pat, and set it carefully on the ground. No, he would find the dog, and if the dog wanted to kill the rabbit, very well. Let the guilt rest between Eve and the dog.

The rabbit wandered off, reluctant perhaps to be put down, and Adam went on up the road. At the spring he remembered Towser's fondness for the hill, and purely from a desire to find the animal, he decided to go as far as Lilith's house. The dog might be there. . . . In fact, he was. Adam heard him barking, and knew she was throwing sticks for him to fetch. There she was, in the center of the grass, white and graceful, and the happy beast dancing about her.

"Oh, how nice!" she called. "I hoped you'd drop in to-day."

Adam took his place on the flat stone.

"I was out looking for the dog," he said, "and it just occurred to me he might be with you."

"You're no flatterer, are you, Adam! It's the dog you're calling on! Well, Towser is my constant companion, these days. You can find him here any time. Why do you want him?"

Any lie was easier than telling her the dog was to kill a rabbit for Eve's civilized stew.

"Oh, I missed him, and wanted to see what he was up to."

"I thought you might want him to go hunting. He's a fine hound—aren't you, Towser?"

"Did you ever kill a rabbit?"

"Dear me, no! Do I look as though I had?"

"I understand they're good to eat."

"Ah, didn't I tell you?" said Lilith.

"What?"

"Long ago I knew you'd go hunting rabbits, with the dog's help, and you wouldn't consider the dog a murderer. Has the moment come so soon?"

Adam was quite uncomfortable.

"I'm not hunting, Lilith—I merely asked you about rabbits. I still feel I couldn't forgive myself if I took so harmless a life."

"As for that," she said, "they do any amount of harm. You're no gardener, Adam. Eve may be trying to save a cabbage."

"No, she wants it for the stew. She thinks rabbit meat will improve the flavor."

"Then you *are* out hunting! You told me a fib, Adam!"

He hung his head, and Towser hung his head, too.

"Sooner or later you would learn not to be truthful—I was sure of it, but I hoped I was wrong. Really, Adam, it isn't worth it. You don't care enough for me. If you were desperately eager to keep my good opinion, I could understand the mistake, though it wouldn't do you any good."

"I do care for your opinion—that's why I wanted you not to know I was going to kill the rabbit."

She looked really sorry for him, and shook her head slowly, from side to side.

"I've no objection to hunting, if that's what you wish—I've told you, almost everybody and everything hunts in this world. You're the one who objects, yet you're doing it! That's what you were ashamed of.

You didn't like me to know that you're no longer your own master."

He got up, desperate.

"Lilith! Will you preach at me too? You were the one person, I thought, who wouldn't be always hinting at my faults and trying to make me better. Yes, I'm doing this because Eve wants it—and I don't care whether she wants it or not, but she says it involves the child."

Lilith thought a moment.

"Don't be angry, Adam—sit down again. Eve probably knows what she is talking about, and you'd be unkind not to give her what she asks for. I shan't preach to you any more. You're quite right—it's not my work in life, and I should do it badly. Let's talk about something else. How is Eve?"

Adam obeyed her and sat down, but he felt the turn of the conversation was leaving him in a bad position.

"I'm sorry I wasn't frank with you, Lilith. I admit I was a coward, and ashamed."

"Why, Adam? That's hard to understand. It's not disgraceful to do for others whom you love what you wouldn't do for yourself. Your only excuse is the fact you hid, that Eve asked you."

"I don't love her!"

Lilith glanced away from him.

"You oughtn't to say that to me—not now. If you don't love the woman you've made your wife, it's your misfortune and hers, but it won't help matters to tell others about it, and it isn't fair—to the others."

"Lilith, you know why I tell you! I didn't intend to marry Eve—you know the one I cared for. To this day I can't explain how it happened. She's a wonderful per-

son—I've come to believe she's far finer than I—if I felt toward her as you and I felt, as I still feel toward you——"

"Adam, no compliments! You ought not to say such things unless you mean them, and if you are deeply in earnest you oughtn't to stop with words. What are you going to do about it? Here are two of us in love with you. If you are correct when you say you love me more than her, take me. Not dishonorably—we'll go together now and tell her she'll never see either of us again. It's a large and generous world, Adam—we'll find room even for our happiness."

He looked at the ground, the picture of anything but happiness.

"Adam—will you?"

He raised his eyes to meet hers.

"Lilith, I can't—not in the circumstances."

She wasn't offended, nor so far as he could see, profoundly disappointed. He imagined her smile was a trifle sad. That was all.

"No," she said. "In the circumstances, you can't. Strangely, Adam, I couldn't love you, couldn't have loved you, if in the circumstances you acted otherwise."

So their love-affair ended, then and there. On the whole he was relieved. The fable of the sour grapes is not reported accurately. To call the inaccessible undesirable, when we know better, is to insult our minds and our hearts. But nature, the wise deity Lilith admired, is sometimes tender toward the weak, and seeing in advance that they will not long maintain themselves in paradise, provides an obtuseness adequate to any catastrophe. What tasted sweet becomes a little sour, and worse with

time, so that when it is taken away we think we are released, and as we are driven out, we have the sense of finding our career.

"Adam, does Eve know you are here?"

"No."

"Tell her. . . . And you ought not to come again."

"Why not?"

"She doesn't like it. . . . And you don't enjoy it much, do you? We can be friends just as well. Seeing each other now adds nothing to—what we've had."

He was about to argue, but she shook her head.

"Take the dog and get the rabbit for her. Say you found the dog at my house. Hide nothing. But don't hurt her again by coming."

"But you told her you'd always want me to come if I wanted to——"

"If she couldn't hold you, I said. Good-by, Adam."

He wanted to kiss her, but she laughed and turned away her lips. Laughed, at such a serious moment! And pretended not to want a kiss, like Eve! He realized she had changed. Essentially they were not so different, after all.

She watched him down the path, with the dog. Just before he disappeared among the trees he thought he ought to turn and wave, for old time's sake, and she waved back. Entirely cheerful. Then she sauntered toward her house. Partings of that sort he had supposed would have an element of agony. What a mercy she cared for him so little!

But he wouldn't catch a rabbit—that was settled. The very mention of it had wounded him, when Eve had sent him out, and Lilith's calm discussion of hunting as

a universal pastime had disgusted him. Tragic things should be talked of tragically, and no one who had once expressed the killing and eating of a rabbit in terms appropriate to the deed itself, would sit still and permit the deed to occur. No, he would assuage Eve by telling her of his parting with Lilith, for ever and ever. That would be worth more to her than any gift. Then he'd inform her, gently of course, that no rabbits were to be killed. If she argued, he would tell her that with the birth of his son, he would take charge of the home. Now that Lilith was eliminated, she had nothing to reproach him with, and he could safely assert himself a little.

"Here, Towser—come back!"

Towser had decided to return to Lilith. Eve's husband had no charms for him. Adam whistled in vain. An odd little allegory of her whole life, when he considered it—of course the animals would go to her. She spoke their language. Yes, he would have to tell Eve firmly that rabbits would not be hunted.

Lilith's proposal to face Eve and smash up his home—now that he had time to think it over, he could see that it revealed the worst side of Lilith. At least, she wanted to take him away from his wife. Hadn't she pretended to hold liberal ideas, independent formulas for this problem? If they loved, then love was enough—that sort of thing. How small Eve had seemed, however logical, when she claimed him for her exclusive own! Yet wasn't that what Lilith now wanted? Good heavens, these women! Up to date, he reflected, he hadn't met a single human being who hadn't wanted to marry him. What a relief it would be to have a son, man's natural companion, a disinterested partner in life! If the son

should be there now, when he reached the house, he could talk to Eve ever so much more firmly—he knew he could.

There was another side to Lilith's new attitude. He hadn't thought of it at the moment, but perhaps she was in love with some one else. The companion she had said she wanted, that day when she pretended to look for him and didn't! She wanted to get rid of Adam! Just think how nonchalantly she had moved toward the house, as though she were saying, "Well, that's over!"

He stopped in the road to consider her perfidy.

Why, of course. If she really had expected him to face Eve with her——

Towser was running by his side, with a dead rabbit in his mouth.

Adam wished he knew how to faint, the complete way Eve did. He felt only half crushed. So the hunt was finished, with or without his consent! The dog was waiting now a second time, for his praise or for another blow with the stick. Adam stooped down, patted the dog's head, and took the rabbit from him. It seemed best to carry it not by the neck, Towser's way, but by the legs.

"Here's your rabbit, Eve!"

Eve wasn't in one of her appreciative moods.

"Eve—look here—rabbit!"

"Where have you been all day?"

"I had to find the dog, didn't I?"

"Did you? I half thought Lilith found him for you."

Well, if that was the way she was going at it, he wouldn't tell her a thing.

"Let me see it."

She examined the fur with a critical eye, and then she looked at its face. In a moment she was drowned in tears.

"It's nothing but murder, Adam—nothing but murder! Just see its innocent little mouth and nose—and its ears! How could you bring yourself to kill it!"

"It cost me a pang, but you would have it."

"I? You insisted on meat in the stew!"

"*I* did? Have you lost your mind?"

She began to cry more violently.

"All right—all right, Eve—I insisted on meat! There, there——"

She dried her eyes with miraculous despatch.

"Don't skin it indoors, Adam—take it outside. It will probably make a mess."

"My dear woman, do you think I intend to *skin* it?"

"Do you intend to eat it with the fur on? Take it outside. Here's the knife."

Towser followed him out, with symptoms of satisfaction.

VII

At first Adam was disappointed in the baby. All the more, perhaps, because it *was* a boy, and he had a high standard for sons. This infant came ill-equipped, uncertain and feeble. He had expected something more like other members of the family. In fact, he was mortified. He had rejected the calf as an image of his own progeny, yet the calf had been able to stand, the very first day. Every two or three hours he tried his son, to see if the faculty of locomotion had arrived, but it hadn't. Moreover, this child couldn't talk, and for companionship, speech was essential. He couldn't make out whether this small person understood even the most obvious signs. He waved his arms, made faces, gyrated on one foot, but his son declined to smile. Perhaps the infant had something on his mind; his eyes suggested profound introspection. Yet who ever built up a comradeship on silent thought?

He didn't like to mention it to Eve, because she seemed to think well of her offspring, but he saw reason to suspect the boy's nerves were in a dreadful state. He could be almost as hysterical as his mother—wiggling his hands, fingers and toes, crying without the slightest provocation, and worst of all, wabbling his head around as though there weren't enough neck to hold it up. And he should have had some hair.

Eve was content. She spent hours washing the infant, or wrapping it up, or singing to it, or feeding it. Adam didn't miss the point that she had never sung for

her husband. Well, she wasn't really singing to the baby—the noise she produced was nondescript and monotonous, but son liked it. Adam wondered if his future character could be guessed by such tokens. The thought induced melancholy. But nothing troubled him so much as the feeding. He had expected to give the newcomer the best in the house—a rabbit stew, perhaps. When he saw what Eve was doing to the child, he blushed. Had his ideals been wasted on the world? Had he lived in vain? Lilith's comparison of cow and wife had offended him, but after this performance of Eve's, what was the difference, anyway? The animal world had conquered him at last. She was so immodest about it, too—she who went indoors to change her clothes! One day she actually sat out on the front door-step to feed the child, with her husband, Towser and the cat looking on.

"Wait a moment, Eve," he said. "If that's necessary I'll get you another dress and put it round you."

"I'm perfectly comfortable."

"You're also conspicuous," said Adam.

"I'm awfully proud of him—I like to be conspicuous. Isn't he a dear, Adam?"

The question, he hoped, demanded no answer. He was correct. Eve continued to impart nourishment. Since the baby arrived, she had said little to her husband. Indeed, she had outgrown her interest in him, temporarily. He wasn't sure she remembered he was there. A subtle jealousy took hold of him, not that he objected to her affection for her son, but he caught the far-off possibility that the son might care a great deal for her.

"Why don't you let me hold the child sometimes, Eve? He's as much mine as yours."

"That won't do any good when you let him fall. You're always dropping things!"

"I am not! Give me that child!"

He sat on the flattest part of their front lawn, held out his arms curved upward, as though expecting a bundle from some great height, and turned to the infant a face seamed with anxiety. Eve lowered the child into his grasp, and kept her own arms beneath, in case he shouldn't be equal to it.

"The most perfect part of him," said Adam, "is the finger-nails. That's what I call a work of art. I don't think a child *could* have a finer-looking hand than that—do you? Upon my word, Eve—see here—the hair's beginning to sprout! That gives me more hope for the teeth."

"I've an idea," said Eve, "he won't get his hair and his teeth very soon. I hope he won't. The lower animals start off with what they need, but they have no one to care for them. With you and me here keeping watch, our son can take his time about all those things. The same way with speech—when he's ready, he'll talk."

"I can't see the advantage of that, Eve. If we coddle him, he may never get started. I don't care so much about the hair—that could come any time—but he ought to talk, and he ought to get on to real food."

"He does well enough," she said. "I like to feed him."

"One thing has been running through my mind," said Adam. "When he does talk he can tell me what it's like to arrive in this condition. You and I, of course, date our memories from a vague maturity, but he's been through it from the very beginning. I can hardly wait

till he's able to tell about it. You see, it's one way of supplying the gap in our history—I had no childhood."

"No," said Eve, "that was left out of your temperament. Will you get some wood? The fire's going out. I need more hot water."

He went further for the wood than was strictly necessary, but he was lost in happy thoughts. He knew he would stay always in that spot, so that when the boy grew up, he could show him the place where you found the fuel, the best part of the river for swimming, the trees with the ripest fruit. The boy would have the advantage of going on, as it were, from where his father left off. He would inherit habits and memories. . . . What fun it would be, some day, to be gathering wood with that youngster beside him! He could see the miniature fingers, grasping a twig.

"The fire's almost out, man—where *have* you been? That's not nearly enough. Don't you know yet how much wood we use in a day?"

"I'll get more when we need it. Don't be cross with me, Eve."

"I'm not cross—I'm telling you there isn't enough wood. Here, hold him while I get his other clothes," said Eve.

She came back with a coat she had woven, of bright colors.

"You know, when I was getting that wood I happened to think he'd be doing the same thing some day. Odd, isn't it! It's hard to imagine, looking at him now."

"I don't imagine it," said Eve. "That child ought to have a distinguished career."

"Yes, certainly, but now and then, while he's still

young, he and I can pick up sticks together. What fun it will be!"

Eve got the coat on the wriggling arms.

"Don't make him sit up so straight, Adam—his neck's getting tired."

"He recognizes me, Eve!"

"Absurd—he probably can't see yet."

"Not after all these weeks? Of course he can. Look here!"

The child had one of his father's fingers in its hand, gripped tight. Adam began bowing, with his lips pursed and his eyebrows raised. For several seconds the mask-like little face showed no appreciation, but at last, very slowly, its mouth widened into a grin.

"There you are! He knows me!"

"Nonsense—he saw me coming," said Eve, adjusting the infant to its next meal.

Adam's pride in his son grew faster than he realized. It drove him at last to call again on Lilith. He had to tell somebody the thoughts surging within him, and Eve was too busy to listen, or not sufficiently impressed.

She was washing the child when he broached the subject. She had the little pink body spread across her knees, face down, and was going over it vigorously with a soft rag and some warm water.

"Eve, I wonder if it wouldn't be courteous for me to go up the hill and let Lilith know about the boy? She may feel hurt if she hears indirectly."

"Yes," said Eve, "she's very sensitive."

"I shan't be gone long. You have everything you need for a while."

As he walked off he expected to be called back, but she let him go. She had her own reasons, perhaps, for wanting Lilith to hear—or perhaps the child made her gentle. As he started through the orchard, she was holding its head with one hand and polishing it with the other.

Lilith was sitting in front of her door, elbows on knees and chin on hands, gazing off into the landscape. When she heard him come, she looked up and smiled, but didn't jump to her feet in her old enthusiastic way. As he drew nearer, he felt rather self-conscious.

"I am glad to see you, Adam. What's the news?"

"It's come. I'm a father."

He sat down, rather out of breath, and she began to laugh. Her way of taking his remarks had never been entirely comprehensible, but strange as she was, he hadn't expected her to laugh at the news of his son. When he looked up indignantly, her eyes were twinkling, and she was making an effort not to laugh harder.

"You're a queer woman, Lilith—the one reason I wanted to tell you was that I thought *you'd* understand."

In a second she was quite serious.

"Understand, dear Adam? Of course I do. You're so proud, you're funny. You're perfectly delightful. It's the best news I've heard in a long while. What's he like?"

"Why were you laughing at me?"

"Well, for several reasons. In the first place, I judged from your exaltation that it did turn out to be a son."

"Yes, I didn't want a girl."

"But you got what you wanted—that's why I laughed. You will always be cared for somehow, I suppose. Nature provides."

"Cared for?"

"It's a kind of luck you have, isn't it? You don't deserve it, Adam."

She laughed again, and he was in some doubt whether to waste more time on her. As he was making up his mind to leave, he remembered she had mentioned another reason for laughing at him.

"Well, if you want to know, I thought it was funny you wished to tell me. You are such a delicious child yourself, Adam."

"Why shouldn't I tell you?"

Apparently she had her reasons for not developing that theme further.

"What's the son like, Adam?"

"The handsomest thing you ever saw—very brainy head, awfully bright eyes, not much of a nose as yet, but Eve says it will be more pronounced. You ought to see his finger-nails and toe-nails, Lilith; really the most complete things for their size. Whenever he sees me he smiles. We took to each other at once."

"Does he resemble you or Eve?"

Adam hesitated.

"Neither very much as yet. But I suppose he'll approach my appearance as he rounds out. He's still rather small. They usually are, wouldn't you say?"

Lilith still showed a disposition to laugh, but for his sake she restrained herself.

"I wish I could see him."

"I'll bring him up the first day he can walk."

"Will Eve like that?"

"Oh, yes, Lilith—I forgot to tell you, you and she are going to be friends."

Lilith raised her eyebrows.

"She knows I'm here now—she told me to come especially and tell you."

Lilith's eyes narrowed ever so little, but her smile returned quickly.

"How implacable she is!"

He missed the point, and, anyway, he had something else to say.

"I want to apologize, Lilith. You know, I didn't like your saying that Eve was a cow."

"When did I say that?"

"When I told you the child was coming, and you said something about a creating force through the universe—the calf and my son—and all that."

"Good heavens, Adam! You didn't get the idea at all. I wondered why you went off so grumpy."

"I got the idea all right, and it's true. She is a cow."

Lilith stared at him, completely dazed.

"What a thing to say about her, Adam!"

"Now see here, Lilith. After all you've preached at one time or another, don't pretend you'd object to being called a cow yourself. *I* don't like the idea, but you tried to drill it into me—nature, and the animal instincts, and——"

"Adam, I don't believe you have ever understood a single word I've said to you. You poor thing! If I only had time enough to straighten you out."

"I've been straightened out often enough. I'd like you a good deal better if you would remain faithful to your principles, especially since Eve is drifting that way too."

"Drifting what way?"

"Well—what I apologized for."

"Adam, why do you say she is a cow?"

"You'll have to see for yourself—I can't describe it."

She looked at him for light, and suddenly the mystery cleared. She began to laugh again.

"All this fuss, Adam, over just another man? Didn't you say once this silly repetition would make life endlessly monotonous?"

That facetious remark was the final error. It showed conclusively her lack of imagination, and the tragic misplacement of her sense of humor. Anybody with half a brain should have been able to take his point of view. Of course it wasn't monotonous to have a son! What he said of the cow had been comment from the outside, as it were. To the cow, the calf, for all he knew, might well have been exciting, but from the outside one cow after another—— But to ask a new father whether his progeny was making life monotonous proved how far out of touch she was with the higher concerns of the soul.

"I'll be getting back now. Eve may need me."

Lilith still sat by her door-step, looking up at him with friendly eyes.

"I am ever so happy for your sake, Adam."

"Well, I thought you'd like to know."

Before he lost himself among the trees, he turned back, but she didn't see him. Her elbows were on her knees, her chin rested in her hands, and she was gazing far away.

"What do you think's the matter with him, Eve?"

"How can I tell? He began to cry a few minutes ago and now he won't stop. It's a pain of some kind."

"Where?"

"How do I know where?"

She began to cry.

"It's no use losing your head, Eve. We've got to work this out. Have you tried rubbing his feet? That did *you* lots of good, you remember."

She was ready to try anything. She rubbed the child in all areas until she reached the stomach. Friction at that spot seemed to produce comfortable results.

"I wonder if he has eaten too much. You're always feeding him, Eve."

"But he's always hungry."

"Then I wonder if he isn't hungry now. Try him."

But he wasn't hungry. He was beyond doubt in great pain.

"Adam, I'll soak my best coat in hot water, and put that on him. What do you think? Not too hot, of course."

"Where's the water?"

"There isn't any. Oh, Adam, the fire's low!"

He had never gathered sticks so quickly, nor run so fast to the river and back. The thought that his son might die gave him speed for the moment, but left in his spirit an incurable wound. Life, then, for man as well as for animals, was a temporary and contingent gift. Of course he had expected to die sooner or later, in some natural conclusion, but the boy was entitled to his share of experience, of happiness, even of worry. He ought to grow up and have a son and be afraid the son would die.

Perhaps the nearness of death, even when you think you are happy, might serve to measure the importance of what you are doing. Beside the plight of his son, what were the pin-pricks of fate he had so far endured? As against the boy's life, what small matters were his adventures with nature and the animals, and the women! He wouldn't mind dying now himself, if it would help the child.

But the extreme sacrifice proved unnecessary. When he got back, the son, by some magic of his own, had disposed of the pain and had showed signs of hunger. Eve was crooning to him as he fed. Adam didn't know why his throat choked and his eyes filled.

"How did you cure him?"

"I didn't—he's just all right again."

Adam put the buckets of water in the shed outside where they'd be handy, and began walking up and down the room, watching his satisfied child.

"I shan't let him repeat my mistakes. He has the advantage of not coming first. I can be a lesson to him from the start. He need never be afraid of the animals, nor be worried by queer noises at night. And he won't have to find things out for himself in the slow way I followed. I've done pretty well, Eve, don't you think, when you consider I had no one to teach me?"

"Hand me that towel, will you?" said Eve.

He handed it, and went on.

"Nature's all right, if you understand it. It's not a bad world. But to be happy, people ought to be far more intelligent than they are. That's where he'll be a great success, with me coming before him. While he is young I can explain why people act as they do, and the differ-

ence between men and women. That's important, I think."

"Will you smooth out his bed? I want to put him down."

He smoothed out the bed, and resumed his walk.

"There's no reason why he shouldn't be the leading man of his time. When you consider the situation of the world at the moment, his ancestry, and his natural gifts——"

"He is going to sleep. Don't talk so loud."

With his hands in his pockets, Adam stood looking at the small figure. Then he turned to his wife and subdued his happy voice.

"Eve, I hope you don't mind my saying it so often, but I'm glad it wasn't a girl. After all, this is a man's world."

THE END.

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